

Weekly Compilation of  
**Presidential  
Documents**



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## WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

## PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, February 24, 2006

**Remarks at a Republican Party of  
Florida Dinner in Lake Buena Vista,  
Florida**

*February 17, 2006*

Thank you all. Thanks for the warm welcome. Please be seated. Florida is a Republican State because Jeb Bush has done in office what he promised the citizens of Florida he would do. He has been a great Governor because he doesn't waver in the face of criticism, because he doesn't rely upon polls and focus groups to tell him what to think, and because he has a clear vision for a better future for the people of this State.

And on top of all that, he married well. I'm proud to be here with my sister-in-law, Columba Bush. I married well too. And Laura sends her love to Columba and Jeb and to our friends here in Florida.

It is so wonderful to be here to be able to thank the many people that helped me get to where I got and helped Jeb get to where he got. And, you know, you just can't take anything for granted in the political business. You can't say thanks enough, and particularly when I look around the room and see so many people that I know I can't thank enough. I'll try: Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for being here. Thank you for helping the party.

I'm proud to be here with Mel Martinez and Kitty—the United States Senator from the State of Florida. I want to thank Mel for standing strong with the administration and with me when it came time to ratify and confirm judges who would strictly interpret the Constitution—judges like Judge Roberts and Judge Alito. And it would sure be nice to have two United States Senators who would confirm conservative judges.

To that end, I welcome Congresswoman Katherine Harris. Thank you for coming. Congressman Ric Keller, Congressman Mike Bilirakis and Evelyn—where's Michael? There he is. Michael, good to see—flew

down on Air Force One, kind of wanted a little comfortable ride back home. *[Laughter]* John Mica is with us, and Pat. John, thank you for being here. Ginny Brown-Waite and Harvey—where's Ginny Brown? Thank you for coming. I appreciate Toni Jennings, the Lieutenant Governor. The attorney general, Charlie Crist, thank you for coming, Charlie; the chief financial officer, Tommy Gallagher.

I guess I shouldn't feel too uncomfortable reading the names back to back, you know? *[Laughter]* Thanks for running. Good luck. *[Laughter]*

I appreciate Charlie Bronson, the commissioner of agriculture. Thanks for being here, Charlie. Members of the statehouse—Senator Tom Lee, the president of the senate, as well as Allan Bense, the speaker of the house. It's good to see you, Allan, thank you. Look, my only advice to the speaker and the president, just do what the Governor tells you. It's real easy. *[Laughter]* That's all it takes. *[Laughter]* Not exactly the way they do it in Washington. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank Carole Jean Jordan, the chairman of the Florida Republican Party. You'd have thought they gave you a better seat than that, you know, after all the hard work. I want to thank Al Austin, who is the finance chairman, and his wife, Beverly. They're great friends of Jeb and mine. Thank you, Al. Jim Blosser, finance cochairman, thank you, Jim. And Jim MacDougald, I appreciate you all being here. Thanks for coming.

Finally, I've got to say something about Rich Crotty. Now, you might remember, Rich raised a little fellow named Tyler. *[Laughter]* I don't know if you remember the moment or not, but I got up there to give what I thought was going to be a stemwinder of a speech, and Tyler went flat asleep. *[Laughter]* So I asked Rich, where is Tyler? He said, "Well, Mr. President, he's taking a nap in anticipation of this address." *[Laughter]* Crotty, give him my best.

I am amazed by this number: The unemployment rate in Florida is 3.3 percent. It's an amazing statistic. It's a tribute to people in office who understand the role of Government is not to try to create wealth, but the role of Government is to create an environment in which people are willing to risk capital, in which small businesses grow to be big businesses, in which people can realize their dreams.

Feeney, I forgot to mention you. [*Laughter*] I was thinking about entrepreneurship and looked right at you. [*Laughter*] This Florida economy is strong, and so is the economy around the United States. We've overcome a lot. We've overcome attacks and corporate scandals and stock market collapses. And yet we're growing—amazing growth last year, over 3 percent growth, in spite of the fact we had high energy prices and a devastating hurricane.

And the reason why is because people feel there's an incentive to work in America. The tax relief we passed is working, and the United States Congress needs to make that tax relief permanent.

You'll hear them say in Washington, "Well, we need to balance the budget." And they're right. But then they say, "We're going to raise the taxes to balance the budget." I just want to warn you that that's not the way Washington works. It may sound good in the newspapers, but Washington works this way—if you give them more money, they will spend it. A tax increase, raising your taxes will mean there is more money to spend in Washington, and this economy isn't going to grow as strong. No, the way to balance the budget is keep pro-growth economic policies in place and be wise about how we spend your money.

There's uncertainty in our economy today. It's an interesting phenomenon, isn't it—you get unbelievable economic growth, and yet, people are worried. They're worried about changing jobs and not having a health care plan they can take with them. They're worried about having the skill set necessary to find the jobs of the 21st century. People are worried about China and India. And any time people worry about an economy, the reaction sometimes in our country is to wall ourselves off from the world, is to be protectionist.

That's the wrong attitude for the United States of America. America needs to be confident about the future because we intend to shape the future.

And that's what this Republican Party stands for. This Republican Party stands for leadership based upon sound principles. And let me share some ideas with you. To keep this economy the leader in the world, we got to make sure we do something about all these frivolous and junk lawsuits that are making it hard to risk capital. And I applaud your Governor, and I urge the Florida legislature to join him in enacting meaningful real tort reform.

We can become independent from oil from the Middle East. In order to remain a competitive nation, in order to remain a world leader, this country has got to use technology to get us off being hooked on oil. I know that may sound strange from a guy from Texas. [*Laughter*] But I sit there and think about the world on a daily basis, I see what happens when there's instability in parts of the world from which we get our oil. Listen, we're close to some amazing technological breakthroughs that will enable us to drive automobiles fueled by ethanol or have a plug-in hybrid battery that will make it much easier for you to use electricity when it comes to driving your cars.

Our party stands for innovation. Our party stands for change. And our party is going to stand for economic and national security by doing something about our dependence on Middle Eastern oil.

We're getting some things done. One of the commitments this Federal Government has made is to take care of the elderly. And when we go to Washington, DC, and the commitment is to take care of the elderly, it seems like to me, we want to make sure we do it in a way that is modern. So I saw an old, tired, stale Medicare system there. You know, this Government of ours would pay thousands of dollars for ulcer surgery but not one dime for the prescription drugs that would prevent the ulcer surgery from being needed in the first place. That's a waste of your money, and it wasn't that—we weren't

fulfilling a promise to our seniors. So we reformed Medicare. And today, seniors are getting modern medicine, thanks to the Republican Party.

And I want to tell you something. We've signed up 25 million people since January 1st for this new, reformed system. And sure, there's some glitches. But we're also the party that knows how to solve problems. And you mark my words; when seniors get settled in and realize what we have done for them, they will realize the Republican Party has delivered good medicine.

But we also know something else, that the best practice of medicine is in the private sector, and the most important relationship is between doctor and patient. And so we're going to continue to promote HSAs, health savings accounts, which puts patients in charge of their health care, and it helps small business afford insurance.

I want to say something about Jeb and education. This guy understands and so does our party, that we must challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations if we want the United States to be the leader in the world's economy. You cannot allow a system to develop in education that just simply shuffles kids through and hopes for the best. It doesn't work. It just doesn't work.

I remember when I was Governor of Texas, and we saw these statistics about kids coming out of high school not able to read. I decided—I dedicated myself then, just like Jeb has dedicated himself as Governor of Florida, to stop this business of socially promoting kids. You know who suffers? Inner-city African American kids suffer; families who don't speak English as a first language suffer. Ours is a party that believes in high standards and excellence when it comes to education.

And so we've said something pretty easy for people to understand. We said, "We're going to spend your money, but we're going to insist that schools measure, because you can't solve problems unless you diagnose the problem." Ours is the party that says no child will left behind—be left behind, and we're delivering on the results.

And so we're going to take this attitude of high standards and accountability and apply it to math, particularly in junior high

grades. If our kids do not have the skills of the 21st century, jobs are going to go somewhere else. In order for this country to remain competitive and the world leader, we must lead the world in research and development, and we must make sure we're educating the young scientists and engineers for the 21st century. And that's exactly what we're going to do.

I am always amazed to hear some talk about, well, you know, maybe the best days are behind us when it comes to our economy. You just got to know something about me. I think this country can do anything we put our mind to. I think we've got such a strong entrepreneurial spirit, such wonderful people, that we're a land of doers and accomplishes and risk-takers, that just given the right impetus and the right leadership, this country will still remain the preeminent economic leader in the world. And that's good for our people, and that means a higher living—standard of living.

I said in my State of the Union, we must reject isolationism. You see, when you get nervous about things or get a little despondent, the tendency is not only to wall yourself off but to withdraw from the world. And in the 21st century, we can't afford to do that. We can't afford to do it because there's an enemy that still lurks, an enemy that wants to attack the American people.

Today in Tampa, I was trying to explain to people how I make decisions, and I said, 9/11 affected my way of thinking, because I made the determination that so long as I'm the President of the United States, I will use everything at my disposal to protect the American people. That is our most solemn duty. I knew the further we got away from 9/11, the more likely it is people would kind of get comfortable and forget the—forget the challenges. And that's good, actually. It's hard to have economic growth if you walk around wondering when the next attack is going to occur. My job and the job of those of us in Washington is to constantly worry on behalf of the American people and to act on behalf of the American people so the American people can go about their business.

In order to be able to defeat an enemy, you've got to understand the nature of the enemy. I will tell you, these people are fierce

ideologs. They have a totalitarian view of the world. In other words, they want to decide how people think and act and how they worship the Almighty. It's their judgment that matters, not an individual's judgment. And they are nothing but coldblooded killers that kill innocent life at the drop of a hat in order to achieve their objectives.

They have clearly stated their objectives, and I hope you appreciate a President who listens carefully to the words of the enemy. See, my job is to see the world the way it is, not the way some would like it to be. And this enemy—[*applause*]. They have openly stated, it's just a matter of time for the United States to lose its nerve. To what end? They want to find safe haven in which to plan, plot, and strike the United States. They look forward to having safe haven in which they can develop weapons of mass destruction to use against our people. This is what the enemy has said.

They made a big mistake, however, when they attacked the United States. They roused a mighty nation that understands the stakes in this war on terror. And we will not relent, and we will not tire until we win the war on terror. So we're on the offense, and we will stay on the offense so long as I'm the President of the United States.

One of the lessons of September the 11th is, we've got to prevent attacks before they occur. There are some old enough out here to remember the era when oceans protected America, and if we saw a threat overseas, we could decide to deal with it if we wanted to, or not. But we no longer have that luxury. And so part of my thinking and part of my rationale for our policy is my clear understanding that we must defeat the enemy overseas so we do not face them here at home.

And that's what we're doing. We got a lot of good people on the hunt right now. It's hard to plot and plan if you're trying to hide from special forces of the United States military.

I also made it clear that if anybody harbors a terrorist, they're equally as guilty of murder; that if you provide safe haven for a terrorist organization, you're equally as guilty as the terrorist. And when the United States—and when the President of the United States

says something, for the sake of peace and stability, he better mean it. And I meant it when I told the Taliban to kick Al Qaida out. They refused to listen, and the United States military and our coalition rid Afghanistan of one of the most barbaric regimes in the history of mankind, and America is safer for it.

The whole world thought Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. The United Nations Security Council voted resolution after resolution after resolution because they felt he had weapons of mass destruction. Members of the United States Senate, both Republicans and Democrats, felt he had weapons of mass destruction. Members of the United States Congress, both Republicans and Democrats, in voting to give me the right to use force to remove Saddam Hussein, felt he had weapons of mass destruction. So did I. And he didn't. But he had the capacity to make weapons of mass destruction. He was a state sponsor of terror. He was shooting at American airplanes. The decision I made was the right decision, and America is safer for it. [*Applause*]

Thank you all. And now we're implementing a strategy for victory, where Iran—I mean, Iraq becomes a ally in the war on terror, where this young democracy can sustain itself and defend itself, where this democracy becomes an example of hope for people in Iran and Syria, where this country can be an example for others who demand the natural rights of men and women.

I want to assure you this—that we have one goal in mind, and that's victory, and we're going to achieve it. And the Iraqi people are helping. Think about what happened in one year. We live in a world where, I guess, there's too many television stations or something—[*laughter*—but there's a lot of opinion; that's for sure. [*Laughter*] But in one year's time, these people who were threatened by brutal terrorists went to the polls three time, every time in increasing numbers, with more and more people voting from different religious groups, saying loud and clear to the world, we love our freedom; we want to be free. The political part of our strategy is working.

And now you'll watch the formation of a Government, and we're helping to make sure there's a unity government. But isn't it fun

to watch a Government being formed by people who had just finished living under the thumb of one of the most brutal tyrants in the history of mankind, Saddam Hussein?

Secondly, we'll help this country grow its economy by being wise about reconstruction money. We understand that in order for people to accept democracy, there has to be tangible benefits in their lives. But the good folks in Iraq are entrepreneurial, and businesses are beginning to flourish. Oh, I know sometimes it's hard to tell it, but it's happening.

And the final part of our strategy is, not only chase the terrorists down inside of Iraq but to train the Iraqis so they can take the fight to the enemy. And there are about 235,000 Iraqis now taking more and more control over their country. You know, one of the interesting measurements early on was when the enemy started bombing recruiting stations. I don't know if you remember that, but they'd drive by with a suicider or an IED and destroy people standing in line trying to serve their nation.

So one of the first questions I asked our commanders was, are you having any trouble finding anybody to sign up? The answer was, absolutely not. The people of Iraq want their freedom, and they're willing to stand up and defend their freedom. And the United States of America is proud to help them do so.

The enemy has got one weapon; they've got one weapon: their willingness to kill innocent life and have those images on the TV screen. The only way we can possibly lose is if we lose our nerve, and we're not going to lose our nerve so long as I am the Commander in Chief.

And the stakes are high, because not only are we defending ourself, not only are we preventing Iraq from becoming a safe haven for Al Qaida and their killers, we're helping spread freedom, which is an incredibly important part of achieving peace. I want the youngsters here to go back and think about the history of Europe over the last 100 years. Americans lost—America lost thousands of lives in World War I and World War II because of war on the European continent. Today, there are no wars on the European continent because of democracy. Democracies do not fight.

You can't imagine somebody saying, "Vote for me; I promise you war." [*Laughter*] Generally, the person doesn't get elected. [*Laughter*] People tend to run and say, "Vote for me; I'll promise to fight corruption," or, "Vote for me; I'll help your child get educated," or, "Vote for me; I'll help your health care system be modern." I believe that everybody in the world desires to be free. I believe there is an Almighty, and I believe the greatest gift of the Almighty, besides salvation, is freedom. And if you believe that, if you believe that, then you shouldn't be surprised that 11 million Iraqis have gone to the polls. And you shouldn't be surprised that Lebanon wants to be free. And you shouldn't be surprised that people are demanding their freedom in Afghanistan. Freedom is on the march, and we're laying the foundation of peace for generations to come.

I'm excited. I am excited to be your President. It has been a fantastic experience. I can't tell you how great it is to represent the United States of America around the world. We're a land of entrepreneurs and doers and dreamers. And when we find people that hurt, we help lead the world. One reason you don't become isolationists in this world is because—let me just say, to whom much has been given, much is required. And a lot has been given in the United States of America.

And the world requires our help in helping defeat HIV/AIDS on the continent of Africa, to feed the hungry, to provide relief in the outreaches of Pakistan, to help those who suffer from tsunami. No, ours is not only a nation laying the groundwork for peace, ours is a nation that's leading the world in compassionate help for people who suffer. We've got a great country. We've got a great country, and we're going to keep it great by making strong decisions that rally and play to the great strength of America, which is the hearts and souls of the American people.

Thanks for letting me be your President. Thanks for supporting Jeb. God bless. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:50 p.m. at Disney's Contemporary Resort. In his remarks, he referred to Kitty Martinez, wife of Senator Mel R. Martinez of Florida; Evelyn Bilirakis, wife of Representative Michael Bilirakis of Florida; Patricia Mica, wife of Representative John L. Mica of



Florida; Harvey Waite, husband of Representative Ginny Brown-Waite of Florida; Jim MacDougald, finance cochairman, Florida Victory 2006; and Mayor Richard T. Crotty of Orange County, FL. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

## **The President's Radio Address**

*February 18, 2006*

Good morning. This coming week, I will visit Wisconsin, Michigan, and Colorado to discuss our strategy to ensure that America has affordable, reliable, and secure sources of energy. The best way to meet our growing energy needs is through advances in technology. So in my State of the Union Address, I announced the Advanced Energy Initiative. We will pursue promising technologies that will transform how we power our vehicles, businesses, and homes so we can reduce our Nation's dependence on foreign sources of energy.

This morning, I want to speak to you about one part of this initiative: Our plans to expand the use of safe and clean nuclear power. Nuclear power generates large amounts of low-cost electricity without emitting air pollution or greenhouse gases. Yet nuclear power now produces only about 20 percent of America's electricity. It has the potential to play an even greater role. For example, over the past three decades, France has built 58 nuclear powerplants and now gets more than 78 percent of its electricity from nuclear power. Yet here in America, we have not ordered a new nuclear powerplant since the 1970s. So last summer, I signed energy legislation that offered incentives to encourage the building of new nuclear plants in America. Our goal is to start the construction of new nuclear powerplants by the end of this decade.

As America and other nations build more nuclear powerplants, we must work together to address two challenges: We must dispose of nuclear waste safely, and we must keep nuclear technology and material out of the hands of terrorist networks and terrorist states.

To meet these challenges, my administration has announced a bold new proposal called the Global Nuclear Energy Partner-

ship. Under this partnership, America will work with nations that have advanced civilian nuclear energy programs, such as France, Japan, and Russia. Together, we will develop and deploy innovative, advanced reactors and new methods to recycle spent nuclear fuel. This will allow us to produce more energy while dramatically reducing the amount of nuclear waste and eliminating the nuclear by-products that unstable regimes or terrorists could use to make weapons.

As these technologies are developed, we will work with our partners to help developing countries meet their growing energy needs by providing them with small-scale reactors that will be secure and cost-effective. We will also ensure that these developing nations have a reliable nuclear fuel supply. In exchange, these countries would agree to use nuclear power only for civilian purposes and forego uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities that can be used to develop nuclear weapons. My new budget includes \$250 million to launch this initiative. By working with other nations under the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership, we can provide the cheap, safe, and clean energy that growing economies need while reducing the risk of nuclear proliferation.

As we expand our use of nuclear power, we're also pursuing a broader strategy to meet our energy needs. We're investing in technologies like solar and wind power and clean coal to power our homes and businesses. We're also investing in new car technologies like plug-in hybrid cars and in alternative fuels for automobiles like ethanol and biodiesel.

Transforming our energy supply will demand creativity and determination, and America has these qualities in abundance. Our Nation will continue to lead the world in innovation and technology. And by building a global partnership to spread the benefits of nuclear power, we'll create a safer, cleaner, and more prosperous world for future generations.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:37 a.m. on February 17 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on February 18. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 17 but

was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## **Remarks on Energy in Milwaukee, Wisconsin**

*February 20, 2006*

John, thanks. Thanks for letting me come by to say hello. *[Laughter]* I've got something on my mind I want to share with you. First, Happy President's Day. It turns out most folks in Washington don't work on President's Day. *[Laughter]* The only one working is the President. *[Laughter]*

I want to talk to you about the fact that I think we're in an important moment in history and that we have a chance to transform the way we power our economy and how we lead our lives. That's what I'm here to talk about. It's a good place to come to talk about it because the truth of the matter is, in order to seize the moment, this country has got to remain technologically advanced.

Johnson Controls has been on the cutting edge of energy technology and other technologies for more than a century. And the innovators that work here and the smart folks who work here are on the leading edge of change, and that's why I've come. And there's a role for Government to help, and I want to explain that role. Before I do, again, I want to thank you, John. I want to thank all the folks who work for Johnson Controls. It's not easy to host the President. *[Laughter]*

I had the honor of touring the laboratory on the other side of town there, and it was really neat to see the engineers and the scientists and the Ph.D.s all working hard to apply their God-given talents to help this country remain on the leading edge of technology. It reminded me of one of the challenges we have in America, and that's to make sure a new generation of our citizens are interested in science and engineering and physics. And part of making sure this country is the leader in the world, we've got to make sure our children are properly educated so they'll be ready for the jobs of the 21st century.

I want to thank Congresswoman Gwen Moore for joining us; I appreciate you coming, nice to see you. They tell me this is your

congressional district, so it's awfully kind of you to let two other Congresspersons join us—that would be Congressman Mark Green and Congressman Paul Ryan. Thank you both for coming. We have eaten a lot of custard in the past. *[Laughter]* I'm still recovering, I want you to know. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank the speaker of the house who has joined us. The mayor of the great city of Milwaukee has joined us, and the county executive has joined us. Thank you all for coming; proud you're here.

By the way, it's always important, if any of you ever run for office, to always remember to recognize the sheriff. *[Laughter]* Sheriff Clarke, thank you for being here. Good to see you again. Thank you.

Our economy is strong. It's gaining steam too. We're now in our fifth year of uninterrupted economic growth. Last year our economy grew at a healthy rate of 3.5 percent, in spite of high energy prices and devastating storms. Real after-tax income is up nearly 8 percent per American since 2001. And that's one of the explanations, one of the reasons why retail sales last month made their biggest gain in more than 4 years. Homeownership is at record levels. That's a good sign. We want people owning things in America. More minorities own a home than ever before in our Nation's history. America's unemployment rate is down to 4.7 percent. That's the lowest level since 2001. We've added 4.7 million new jobs over the last 2½ years. We're doing fine.

The fundamental question is, how do we keep doing fine? The challenge that faces us is—is how we make sure that the economic growth today carries over for tomorrow. And that's what I want to talk about. In order to understand what to do, you've got to understand what got us to where we are today. Part of it is keeping taxes low, by the way, and that's exactly what I intend to do so long as I'm the President, is keep taxes low. Part of it is being wise about how we spend our money. Part of it is understanding how technology plays in the future of the country.

Think back 25 years ago, in the start of the 1980s. It's not all that long ago, really. Some of us remember the '80s pretty clearly—*[laughter]*—a lot of kind of gray-haired folks here that lived through the '80s.

[*Laughter*] Then most Americans used typewriters instead of the computers. They used pay phones—you remember what those were—instead of cell phones. They used carbon paper instead of laser printers, bank tellers instead of ATMs, and they played the license plate game on trips, as opposed to DVDs. [*Laughter*] Times have changed a lot in 25 years because of technology.

We're seeing new develops all the time—new developments. Advanced battery technology allows cell phones to last about 50 percent longer than they did just 5 years ago. In your laboratory we're seeing—firsthand seeing the progress being made because of your scientists and engineers in lighter, more potent battery technology. Lightweight parts and better engines allow cars to travel 60 percent farther on a gallon of gas than they did three decades ago.

Technologies are helping this economy become more efficient. Listen to this: Over the last 30 years, our economy has grown three times faster than our energy consumption. The economy has grown three times faster than energy consumption. During that period of time, we created 56 million jobs while cutting air pollution by 50 percent. Technology is really important for the future of this country. And so in the State of the Union, I said that by using technology, we can help make sure this country remains a world leader. And that starts with making sure we change our energy habits.

I know it came as a shock to some to hear a Texan stand up there in front of the country and say, "We've got a real problem; America is addicted to oil." But I meant it, because it's a true fact, and we've got to do something about it now. Oil is the primary source of gasoline; it is the primary source of diesel; it is the primary source of jet fuel. And that means that oil accounts for virtually all energy consumption in the vital transportation sector of our economy.

The oil we consume in this important sector comes from foreign countries; most of it does. In 1985, three-quarters of the crude oil used in U.S. refineries came from America; today, that equation has changed dramatically. Less than half the crude oil used in our refineries is produced here at home.

Sixty percent comes from foreign countries. Things have changed since 1985.

Some of the nations we rely on for oil have unstable governments or fundamental differences with the United States. These countries know we need their oil, and that reduces influence. It creates a national security issue when we're held hostage for energy by foreign nations that may not like us.

Energy is also part of our economic security as well. That's obvious. I mean, the global demand for oil has been rising faster than supply because there's new economies that are beginning to gin up, new economies growing, like China and India. Oil prices rise sharply when demand is greater than supply. And when they do, it strains your budgets. It hurts our families; it hurts our small entrepreneurs. It's like a hidden tax. And so we're vulnerable to high prices of oil, and we're vulnerable to sudden disruptions of oil. What I'm telling you is oil—the dependence upon oil is a national security problem and an economic security problem. And here's what we intend to do about it.

First, Congress passed a good energy bill last summer; I was pleased to sign it. It took a little bit of work. It's kind of hard to get things done in Washington; there's a lot of sharp partisan elbows up there these days. But we got something done, and it's a good bill. It encourages conservation and new technologies and alternative sources of energy. But there's a lot more that needs to be done.

The first thing that needs to be done is to make sure that there's an incentive for private business to invest in research and development. If technology is going to help us change our energy habits and change the way we live, it makes sense for the Government to incent people to invest in research and development. Right now we've got what we call a research and development tax credit, which is a major incentive for private companies such as yourselves to invest in research and development, which will yield new technologies. The problem is, is that the R&D tax credit expires. As a matter of fact, they've only renewed it on an annual basis.

Now, I don't know how in the heck Congress thinks that people can plan properly if they're uncertain as to whether or not the

tax credit is going to exist. So therefore, if we want to be on the leading edge of research and development, then Congress needs to make the R&D tax credit a permanent part of the Tax Code.

Secondly, Government can help. Government provides about a third of the dollars for research and development. Two-thirds come from the private sector; one-third comes from the Government. And so I propose to double the Federal commitment to the most critical basic research programs in the physical sciences over the next decade.

Let me explain our strategy when it comes to energy. So in other words, part of our strategy is to make sure people continue to invest. The research you're doing at Johnson Labs will change people's lives appreciably. But we've got to continue to make sure we conduct research and development if we want to be a leader in the world. If we don't want to be a leader in the world, fine; we'll just quit. That's not how I view America. I want America to lead the world, because by leading the world when it comes to the economy, we're helping our people. We're making our people more productive, and productivity increases enhance standard of living, and increased standards of living means the American people are doing better.

Now, I laid out what's called an Advanced Energy Initiative. And a cornerstone of the initiative is a 22-percent increase in funding for clean energy research at the Department of Energy. And it's got two major goals, or two objectives: First, to transform the way we power our cars and trucks; and secondly, to transform the way we power our homes and offices.

So let me talk to you about the first one. Our Nation is on the thresholds of some new energy technologies that I think will startle the American people. It's not going to startle you here at Johnson Controls because you know what I'm talking about. *[Laughter]* You take it for granted. But the American people will be amazed at how far our technology has advanced in order to meet an important goal, which is to reduce our imports from the Middle East by 75 percent by 2025 and eventually getting rid of our dependence totally.

The first objective is to change the way we power our cars and trucks. Today's cars

and trucks are fueled almost exclusively by gasoline and diesel fuel, which, of course, comes from oil. To transform the way we power the vehicles, we have got to diversify away from oil. I just gave you a reason from a national security perspective as well as economic security perspective why reliance upon oil is not good for the United States.

And so here are three ways that we can do that, change our reliance from oil. First, invest in new kinds of vehicles that require much less gasoline. It's a practical thing to do. Secondly, find new fuels that will replace gasoline, and therefore, dependence on oil. And finally, develop new ways to run a car without gasoline at all.

The most promising ways to reduce gasoline consumption quickly is through hybrid vehicles. Hybrid vehicles have both a gasoline-powered engine and an electric battery based on technologies that were developed by the Department of Energy. In other words, this technology came to be because the Federal Government made a research commitment. That's why I think it's double—important to double research as we go down the next decade. The gasoline engine charges the battery, which helps drive the vehicle. And the twin sources of power allow hybrid cars and trucks to travel about twice as far on a gallon of fuel as gasoline-only vehicles. That is a good start, when something can go twice as far on a gallon of gasoline than the conventional vehicle can.

Hybrid vehicles are a good deal for consumers, and the American people are figuring it out. More than 200,000 hybrids were sold in the United States last year—the highest sales on record. There's growing demand for hybrid automobiles. And working with the Congress, we came up with an additional incentive, and that is, we provide a tax credit up to \$3,400 per hybrid vehicle purchaser. In other words, we want to stimulate demand. In the marketplace, when there is demand, suppliers will meet that demand, and that's positive, because if you can go twice as far on a gallon of gasoline than otherwise, it means we're becoming less dependent on oil. Hybrid vehicles on the road today are delivering impressive gasoline savings.

But there is more to be done, and that's why I'm here at Johnson Controls, because

engineers here are working on ways to replace the current hybrid battery technology with advanced lithium ion batteries that are now used in cell phones and laptops. These batteries are lighter; they are more powerful; and they can be recharged quickly. Using new lithium ion batteries, engineers will be able to design the next generation of hybrid vehicles, called plug-in hybrids, that can be recharged through a standard electrical outlet. Start picturing what I'm talking about: You've got your car; you pull in; you plug it right in the wall. *[Laughter]*

Development will make a big difference in the performance of hybrid cars and trucks. Instead of depending on the gasoline engine to recharge the electric battery, the plug-in hybrids will have fully charged batteries as soon as you get in the automobile. And that means plug-in hybrids will be able to travel much greater distances on electricity alone, thereby saving more gas for our consumers, thereby making us less dependent on oil.

The plug-in hybrid, they estimate, can initially go 40 miles on electricity alone. So you've got a lot of folks living in cities like Milwaukee, Wisconsin, who generally don't drive more than 40 miles a day. Therefore, within 40 miles, you'll be on electricity and using no gasoline. Eventually, plug-in hybrids with lithium ion batteries will be able to get 100 miles per gallon. And now all of a sudden, you're beginning to see the effects of this important technology on our national security and on our economic security, but more important, for the pocketbook of our consumers.

Plug-in hybrids are a really important part of the strategy I've announced, and we're going to provide \$31 million to speed up research on these advanced technologies—this is a 27-percent increase over current funding levels. In other words, we like to—the experts tell me this is a very good chance to have major breakthroughs, and we want to accelerate those breakthroughs. And, again, I want to thank you all for being on the leading edge of change.

We're also supporting the development of advanced fuels that can replace regular gasoline. Here again I'm talking to folks who know what I'm talking about—I'm talking about ethanol. You've got a lot of it here in

Wisconsin because you've got corn. Ethanol is produced—primarily produced from corn; it's blended with gasoline to produce clean and efficient fuel. And blends with that ethanol concentration of less than 10 percent, ethanol can be used in any vehicle. With minor modifications—I emphasize “minor modifications”—cars and trucks can become what we call flex-fuel vehicles that run on a fuel blend called E-85, which is a mix of 85 percent ethanol and 15 percent gasoline. That's a positive development.

Ethanol, by the way, can be used in hybrid vehicles. So the more ethanol we use, the less crude oil we consume. And using ethanol has the added benefit of supporting our farmers. I like to kind of tease in a way, but beneath the tease is serious—it will be good one day when the President is given the crop report. *[Laughter]* It says, “Mr. President, corn is up—*[laughter]*—and we're less dependent on foreign sources of energy.”

America produced a record 3.9 billion gallons of ethanol in 2005—was the record levels. That's twice the level produced when I got sworn in first time. There are five ethanol plants that are up and running here in Wisconsin, and more are coming. We offer a tax credit to ethanol blenders of 51 cents per gallon. We're committed to ethanol. It makes sense. Ethanol benefits a lot of folks, but most importantly, it benefits those who are driving cars.

Now, we're on the edge of advancing additional ethanol production. New technology is going to make it possible to produce ethanol from wood chips and stalks and switch grass and other natural materials. Researchers at the Energy Department tell me we're 5 or 6 years away from breakthroughs in being able to produce fuels from those waste products. In other words, we're beginning to—we're coming up with a way to make something out of nothing. And this is important because it's—economics are such that it's important to have your ethanol-producing factories or plants close to where the product is grown.

That's why E-85 has spread throughout the Midwest; that's where you're growing the corn. Pretty soon, you know, if you're able to grow switch grass and convert that into ethanol, then you're going to have availability

for ethanol in other parts of the country. I mean, there's a lot of stuff that gets thrown away that may be converted into fuel, but it's not just located in one part of the country; it's located around the country. And one of the goals is to make sure that ethanol is widespread. If we want to affect our consumption of oil, we want ethanol to be readily available for consumers outside certain parts of the—certain regions of the country.

And so we proposed spending \$150 million for Government and private research into these homegrown fuels. It's an important initiative. We want to provide our consumers with reasonable, cost-effective ways to help us become less dependent on foreign sources of oil.

And we've got another initiative that I find interesting, and it's important. And that is, we're spending money—your hard-earned money—on research to develop a vehicle that will not use gasoline, and it won't produce any pollution whatsoever, and that's through hydrogen. When hydrogen is used in a device called a fuel cell, it can deliver enough electricity to power a car that emits pure water instead of exhaust fumes. It's an exciting new technology. We're a ways down the road from bringing it to fruition, but we are spending \$1.2 billion over 5 years to research this important opportunity.

We're seeing some progress, by the way, when it comes to hydrogen fuel cells. They tell me that the cost of manufacturing hydrogen fuel cells has been cut in half, which is good. Research is taking place. There could be a new technology available so that when your children take their first driver's test—or when some of your children take their first driver's test, they will do so in a hydrogen-powered automobile.

And so those are three steps, three important steps, three steps in which we can help change our driving habits. And by changing our driving habits, we've changed our dependency on foreign sources of oil.

Now, the second objective of the Advanced Energy Initiative is to transform the way we power our homes and offices. And so we've got to diversify our electricity supply, is what I'm about to—I'll give you the bottom line first: We must diversify. Right now American electricity is generated by four

principle sources: Coal accounts for about 50 percent; nuclear power, about 20 percent; natural gas, about 18 percent; and renewable sources like hydroelectric, solar, and wind power account for the rest.

The most versatile of these fuels is natural gas, and there we have a problem. We have a problem because natural gas is used for more than just heating your homes. Natural gas is important for—to help create fertilizer for farmers. Natural gas powers heavy duty machinery used for manufacturing and chemical production. In other words, there's a lot of uses for natural gas. And yet natural gas has become really popular for electricity generation in recent years, and the price has tripled recently. And these price increases obviously affect our farmers; they affect our ranchers; they affect our consumers.

And they affect our businesses. Businesses that rely upon natural gas feedstocks have found that in order to stay in business, they've got to move their plants closer to where vast quantities of natural gas are being discovered, and that's not here in the United States—that's elsewhere.

And so we've got to figure out how to confront this issue. And here's two ways to do it. First, we've got to make sure that we've got enough natural gas to meet our home heating and industrial needs. And one of the best ways to secure supply is to expand our ability to receive liquefied natural gas. It's a supercool form of natural gas that can be transported from overseas on tankers. Natural gas inside of America is generally transported by pipeline. Huge supplies of gas exist outside the reach of pipelines. And technology is being developed that can cool the gas. They can bring the gas over in tankers in liquefied form, deliquefy it, and put it into our pipeline system.

The problem is, is that we didn't have enough sites to set up terminals to receive the LNG. And until there's a place for the LNG to unload, the liquefied natural gas, what I'm talking about isn't going to come to fruition. And so one of the things in the energy bill that was important is, it clarified Federal authority to site new receiving terminals for LNG. And that's good. In other words, if we need more natural gas to make sure that we take the pressure off the heating

bills as well as meet our industrial needs, we've got to have places for the liquefied natural gas to come into the country.

And the bill also did another important thing, and that is to streamline permitting processes for onshore natural—off—onshore, offshore natural gas exploration. In other words, we've got to make it easier—and at the same time, protect our environment—to make sure that we can find natural gas that fits into the pipeline to help take the pressure off of price.

Secondly, we need to reduce our reliance on natural gas for electricity generation. In other words, we've got to substitute other forms of power for natural gas if we expect to be able to maintain a manufacturing base that relies upon natural gas. And the best way to do that is to expand our use of coal, nuclear power, and renewable sources of energy like wind and solar.

Let me start with coal. Coal is by far our country's most abundant and affordable energy resource. It's estimated we've got more than 250 years of reserves. That's a lot; that's a lot. And I'm sure you recognize this—or realize this, but in Wisconsin, when you flip on the light switch, there's a 75-percent chance that electricity is generated by coal-powered plants. In other words, you use it here in Wisconsin.

Coal has the potential to reduce our reliance on natural gas. The problem is, we've got to make sure that we can keep our commitment to the environment. Coal requires investment to make sure that we don't pollute our air. And that's the conundrum; that's the difficulty with coal. This country is—I told you we've reduced our air pollution by 50 percent, in spite of the fact that our economy has grown substantially. We want to continue that commitment.

I told folks when I was running for President the first time around that we would invest \$2 billion over 10 years to promote clean coal technology. In other words, I believed, as did many others, that technology will help us deal with this dilemma. And we're on our way, by the way, to complete the promise several years ahead of schedule. In other words, we are committing research dollars to see if we can't use this abundant resource

and, at the same time, protect our environment.

The coal research has helped pioneer more effective pollution controls. We're helping coal plant efficiency. We've also implemented new clean air regulations that use a cap and trade system, which gives utility companies incentives to continue investing in clean coal technology. Congress needs to pass my Clear Skies legislation.

But we're getting closer to an interesting, important goal—that by continuing to invest at the Federal level as well as encourage private investment, we will build the world's first powerplant to run on coal that produces zero emissions, by 2015. That will be a positive development for future generations of Americans.

I'd like to talk about nuclear power. Today, there are more than 100 nuclear plants in America that operate in 31 States, including right here in Wisconsin. The plants are producing electricity safely, and they don't emit any air pollution or greenhouse gases. America hasn't ordered a nuclear plant since the 1970s, and that's the result of litigation—or because of litigation and complex regulations.

It's interesting when you think about a country like France, however; they have built 58 plants since the 1970s; they get 78 percent of their electricity from nuclear power. It's an interesting contrast, isn't it? We haven't done anything since the '70s. This country has decided to recognize the importance of having renewable sources of energy that protect the environment, and 78 percent of their electricity comes from this form of energy. China has 8 nuclear plants in the works, by the way, and plans to build at least 40 more over the next two decades.

I'm going to India later on—at the beginning of next month, March 1st. I'm going to talk about a civilian nuclear power program for India. I'll tell you why I am in a minute, but first, let's talk about here at home.

I think we ought to start building nuclear powerplants again. I think it makes sense to do so. Technology is such that we can do so and say to the American people, "These are safe, and they're important." To encourage construction of nuclear powerplants, there's new Federal risk insurance for the

first six new plants that will be built in the country. That's part of the energy bill I signed. This insurance helps protect the builders of these plants against lawsuits or bureaucratic obstacles and other delays beyond their control. In other words, there's an incentive to say, "Let's get six of them started."

The administration has also launched what's called Nuclear Power 2010 Initiative. It's a \$1.1 billion partnership between the Government and industry to facilitate new plant orders. Chairman Nils Diaz of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission is taking steps to streamline the licensing process for new plant construction. In other words, we're analyzing barriers and hurdles and trying to eliminate them so we can start this process.

If we're trying to become less dependent on foreign sources of oil or energy like natural gas, we want to free up our natural gas to keep our manufacturing base intact; we need to move forward when it comes to alternative sources like nuclear power. And there's some encouraging results, and the mindset is beginning to change. After all, the mindset needed to change; we haven't built a plant since the 1970s. That's a fairly long period of time.

This time last year, only two companies were seeking to build nuclear powerplants; now nine companies have expressed a new interest in new—interest in new construction. They're considering as many as 19 new plants. This progress is going to help an important goal. We'll start building nuclear powerplants again by the end of this decade. As part of our strategy, as part of our way to make sure that the future is bright and that America remains a leader in the world, is to understand the promise of nuclear power.

We're also going to work with other nations to help them build nuclear power industries. And the reason why is, this is a global world in which we live, and demand for oil in China and India affects price here in America. And so, therefore, if we can help relieve the pressure off of demand for fossil fuels, it helps the entire world.

And so we've got some challenges, however, in dealing with this issue. And that's why I put together what's called a global nu-

clear energy partnership. It's a partnership that works with countries that have got advanced nuclear energy programs or civilian nuclear energy programs like France and Great Britain and Japan and Russia. And here are the objectives of the partnership.

First, supplier nations will provide fuel for nonsupplier nations so they can start up a civilian nuclear energy program. In other words, a lot of countries don't know how to enrich; a handful do, and it makes sense that we share that—share the benefits of our knowledge with others—but not share the knowledge, because there's concern about proliferation.

One of the concerns you hear from the critics of expanding nuclear power is, all this will do to create proliferation concerns. Well, here's one way to address those concerns—to say, "We'll provide the fuel for you, and we'll collect the fuel from you, by the way, and after we collect the fuel from you, we need to reprocess the spent nuclear material." By reprocessing, you can continue to use the fuel base, but equally importantly, we'll reduce the amount of nuclear waste that needs to be stored.

So here is an initiative that affects us here at home and an initiative that will help others develop nuclear power so they can generate their economic growth. We want people growing in the world. We want people—economies to be in good shape. And we also expect others to help us protect the environment as well.

Another electricity source with enormous potential is solar power. Today, Americans use small amounts of solar power, mainly to heat water or to power small consumer products like outdoor lights. After spending some time with you all here, I'm going over to Michigan to go to a company that manufactures thin film, photovoltaic cells. That's kind of a fancy word for cells that can generate electricity directly from sunlight.

The technology—solar technology has the potential to change the way we live and work, if you really think about it. For example, roof makers will one day be able to create a solar roof that protects you from the elements and, at the same time, powers your house. And that's what these folks are working on.



The vision is this: That you will have—that the technology will become so efficient that you'll become a little power generator in your home and that if you don't use the energy you generate, you'll be able to feed it back into the electricity grid. The whole purpose of spending money on solar power—and we intend to spend \$150 million next year in funding for both Government and private research—is to bring to market as quickly as possible this important and impressive technology. It's really going to help change the way we live—we think—and we want solar power to become competitive by 2015.

Another promising renewable is wind. You're getting—as Laura says, “When you speak too long, you're a little windy.” [*Laughter*] I'm not saying I'm wind power—[*laughter*—but I am telling you I recognize the importance of wind power. More than \$3 billion worth of equipment to generate electricity from wind was installed in America last year. In other words, it's a new industry; it's beginning to grow; \$3 billion is a good investment, good amount of investment. Obviously, people think there's potential when it comes to wind energy.

About 6 percent of the continental U.S. has been identified as highly suitable for construction of wind turbines. Some have estimated that this area alone has the potential to supply up to 20 percent of our Nation's electricity. In other words, they've identified 6 percent of the country's landmass as a good place for wind turbines that, if installed with the right technology, could have a major effect on the electricity that we all use. So we're proposing additional money for research and development.

I think you're beginning to get the drift of what I'm talking about. We're on the edge of some amazing breakthroughs—breakthroughs all aimed at enhancing our national security and our economic security and the quality of life for the folks who live here in the United States. And so, therefore, now is the time for Congress to join me in spending this money. I think it's a good use of your money, to help us achieve major breakthroughs in how we live and how we can reduce our dependency on oil. This is an issue that Republicans and Democrats can and

must come together on. It's an issue that—[*applause*].

Think about how your children or your grandchildren may be able to spend a President's Day in the future. If you're planning a trip to visit relatives, you can plug in your hybrid car the night before and drive the first 40 miles on your lithium ion battery. If you've got more distance to go, you can fill up at your local ethanol station. If you're in Wisconsin, you'll be filling it up with corn product. In Crawford, it may just be switch grass. [*Laughter*] You may decide to travel in a hydrogen-powered minivan and refuel at a station with hydrogen generated by a local nuclear powerplant. When you finally make it to where you're going, you can sit at a house that is lit by clean coal or wind energy or solar-powered roof over your head.

We're close. We're close to having this vision realized in America. And by the way, this can all be done—the whole trip can be done without consuming a single drop of oil. It's within our reach. There was a lot of time when most Americans would never have imagined that we'd be traveling long distance in our automobile instead of a buggy or sending e-mails instead of letters. In the life of this Nation, we have seen incredible and rapid advances in technology—in the history of this country.

I believe the greatest advances are yet to come, and I want to thank the good folks here at Johnson for helping them come. Thanks for your time. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:43 a.m. at Johnson Controls Building Efficiency Business. In his remarks, he referred to John M. Barth, chief executive officer, president, and director, Johnson Controls, Inc.; John Gard, speaker, Wisconsin State Assembly; Mayor Tom Barrett of Milwaukee, WI; and Scott Walker, county executive, and Sheriff David A. Clarke, Jr., of Milwaukee County, WI.

### **Remarks Following a Tour of United Solar Ovonic in Auburn Hills, Michigan**

*February 20, 2006*

I just had a interesting tour of United Solar here in the State of Michigan. I also had the

honor of meeting the inventor of a lot of the technology and the machines here. A couple of things struck me. One, solar technology is commercial and—particularly because they've figured out ways to make long rolls of this photovoltaic technology. That's important to help us achieve a major goal, which is to become less dependent on foreign sources of oil.

I spent the day earlier in Wisconsin, where I was able to see some amazing technologies that will help us change the way we drive our automobiles. This technology right here is going to help us change the way we live in our homes. The ultimate goal is to have solar technology on your home, and that home will become a little power-generating unit unto itself, and that if you have extra electricity, that you could put it back in your grid, so you become a power producer, but you're using renewable sources of energy to power your homes and to fire up your refrigerators. And this is real. I really am thankful that the folks of this company gave me a chance to come and visit about it.

The role of the Government at this point is to continue to spend research dollars to help push technologies forward, is to get these technologies to be even more competitive in the marketplace. And I'm calling on Congress to join us on this most important energy initiative. As most folks know, there's a lot of needless politics in Washington, DC. There's a lot of finger pointing and a lot of zero-sum attitude amongst the people up there. And of all the issues, becoming less dependent on foreign sources of energy is an issue that we ought to be able to unite and show the American people we can work together to help advance the technologies that will change the world in which we live.

I am very excited about what I've seen here. I'm excited about the future, because we've got great inventors and great entrepreneurs here in our own country, preparing for ways to enable the American people to get rid of our addiction to oil. And that will not only enhance our economic security but enhance our national security as well.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:18 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Subhendu Guha, presi-

dent and chief operating officer, United Solar Ovonic.

### **Remarks in a Discussion on Energy Conservation and Efficiency in Golden, Colorado**

*February 21, 2006*

**The President.** Thank you all. Please be seated. Thanks for having me. I am honored to be at the National Renewable Energy Lab, which will be henceforth called NREL. [Laughter] I have come today to discuss unbelievable opportunities for our country to achieve a great national goal, and that is to end our addiction on oil.

I know it sounds odd for a Texan to say that. [Laughter] But I have spent a lot of time worrying about the national security implications of being addicted to oil, particularly from parts of the world where people may not agree with our policy or our way of life, and the economic security implications of being hooked on oil, particularly since the demand for oil is rising faster than the supply of oil. And any time that happens, it creates the conditions for what could be—price disruption and price spikes at home are like hidden taxes on the working people of our country.

And so we're here to discuss ways to achieve this really important national goal. And there's no better place to come than NREL, and I want to thank you all for hosting me. I appreciate—I really appreciate the scientists and dreamers and, more importantly, doers who work here to help achieve this important goal.

I recognize that there has been some interesting—let me say—mixed signals when it comes to funding. The issue, of course, is whether or not good intentions are met with actual dollars spent. Part of the issue we face, unfortunately, is that there are sometimes decisions made, but as a result of the appropriations process, the money may not end up where it was supposed to have gone. I was talking to Dan about our mutual desire to clear up any discrepancies in funding, and I think we've cleaned up those discrepancies. My message to those who work here is: We want you to know how important your work

is; we appreciate what you're doing; and we expect you to keep doing it; and we want to help you keep doing it.

I want to thank Dan. He's going to be saying some stuff here in a minute, so we're not going to—I'm just going to thank him. I want to thank your staff for hosting us. It's a pain to host the President. *[Laughter]* But anyway, you've done a fine job. And I want to thank the Governor of the State of Colorado, Bill Owens, for joining us. The United States Senator Ken Salazar—thanks for coming, Ken. I appreciate it. The Congressman from this district, Bob Beauprez—I appreciate you being here. The Congressman from the adjoining district, Mark Udall—Mark, there you go. Thanks for coming.

We got all kinds of people—we got the mayor—appreciate you coming, Mayor Baroch. Thanks for coming, Mayor. Just fill the potholes. *[Laughter]* You got a great city—thanks for having us. I appreciate the statehouse folks, Senator Andy McElhany and Joe Stengel, from this district. I think that's right. Appreciate you coming. Thank you, Andy. Good to see you. I want to thank the directors—thank everybody. *[Laughter]*

So the challenge is, what do we do to achieve objectives? In other words, we set goals—so what do we need to do? What do we need to do as a nation to meet the goal? How can we fulfill our responsibilities that really say we understand the problems we face? So here's what we need to do.

First, we need to make sure we're the leader of technology in the world. I don't mean just relative to previous times in American history. I think this country needs to lead the world and continue to lead the world. And so, how do you do that? First, there's a Federal commitment to spending research dollars. In my State of the Union, I called on Congress to double the research in basic sciences at the Federal level. This will help places like NREL. It will continue this grand tradition of the Federal Government working with the private sector to spend valuable research money in order to make sure we develop technologies that keep us as the leader.

In order for us to achieve this national goal of becoming less dependent on foreign sources of oil, we've got to spend money. And the best place to do that is through research

labs such as NREL. Now, we also got to recognize that two-thirds of the money spent on research in the United States comes from the private sector. See? So it's one thing for the Federal Government to make a commitment of doubling the funding over a 10-year period, but we've got to recognize that most of the money is done through corporate America, through the private sector.

And one thing that seems like a smart thing to do, for me, is to make the tax rules clear. The research and development tax credit expires on an annual basis. It doesn't make any sense to say to corporate America or the private sector, "Plan for the long run, but we're not going to tell you whether or not the Tax Code is going to be the same from year to year." And so, in order to encourage that two-thirds of the investment in the private sector—necessary to help us achieve national goals and objectives, one of which is to stay on the leading edge of innovation—is to have the research and development tax credit a permanent part of our Tax Code.

Now, in order to get us less addicted to oil, we got to figure out where we use oil, and that's pretty easy, when you think about it. We use a lot of oil for our transportation needs. And so if we can change the way we drive our cars and our trucks, we can change our addiction to oil. And laboratories such as this are doing unbelievably interesting work on helping us change the way we drive our automobiles. And you're going to hear some interesting discussion with people who are on the frontlines of these technological changes.

Just—I want to tell the American people three ways that we can change the way we drive our automobiles. One is through the use of hybrid vehicles. And Congress wisely increased the tax credit available to those who purchase hybrid vehicles. In other words, we're trying to increase demand for hybrid vehicles. You can get up to a \$3,400 tax credit now if you buy a hybrid vehicle. Hybrid vehicles are vehicles that use a gasoline engine to help charge a battery, and when the battery is charged, the battery kicks in, and if the battery gets low, the gasoline engine kicks back in to charge the battery.

It's a hybrid—in other words, two sources of power for the engine.

The new technological breakthrough, however, is going to be when we develop batteries that are able to enable an automobile to drive, say, the first 40 miles on electricity alone. Those are what we call plug-in hybrid vehicles. And yesterday I was at Johnson Controls, which is one of the private-sector companies that are developing the new technologies to enable cars to be able to not need the gasoline engine to charge the battery. Now, that saves a lot of—you can begin to think about how this new technology is going to enable us to save on gasoline use, which makes us less dependent on crude oil, since crude oil is the feedstock for gasoline.

The idea is to have an automobile, say, that can drive 40 miles on the battery, as I mentioned. But if you're living in a big city, that's probably all you're going to need for that day's driving. And then you can get home and plug your car right into the outlet in your house. This is coming. I mean, we're close to this. It's going to require more research dollars. The budget I submitted to the Congress does have money in it for this type of research for new types of batteries. But I want the people to know we're close. The hybrid vehicles you're buying today are an important part of making sure you save money when it comes to driving. But they're going to change with the right research and development. Technology will make it so that the hybrid vehicles are even better in getting us less addicted on oil and making it good for the consumer's pocketbook.

Secondly, there is a fantastic technology brewing—I say brewing; it's kind of a catch on words here—[laughter]—called ethanol. I mean, it's—there's a lot of folks in the Midwest driving—using what's called E-85 gasoline. It means 85 percent of the fuel they're putting in their car is derived from corn. This is exciting news for those of us worried about addiction to oil. I mean, you grow a lot of corn; you're less dependent on foreign sources of energy. Using corn for fuel helps our farmers and helps our foreign policy at the same time. It's a good deal.

The problem is, we need more sources of ethanol. We need more—need to use different products than just corn. Got to save

some corn to eat, of course. [Laughter] Corn flakes without corn is kind of—[laughter]. And so one of the interesting things happening in this laboratory and around the country is what's called the development of cellulosic ethanol. That's a fancy word for using switch grass, corn—or wood products, stuff that you generally allow to decompose, to become a source of energy.

And as our fellow citizens begin to think to whether or not it makes sense to spend research, imagine—dollars on this technology, imagine people in the desert being able to grow switch grasses that they can then convert into energy for ethanol for the cars that they're driving there in Arizona. I mean, all of a sudden, the whole equation about energy production begins to shift dramatically. And we're going to hear a lot about cellulosic ethanol.

Finally, hydrogen fuel cells. It's not a short-term solution or an intermediate-term solution, but it's definitely a long-term solution. It will help us achieve grand objectives, less dependence on oil, and the production of automobiles that have zero emissions that could harm our air. And we'll talk a lot about hydrogen fuel cells.

Finally, I do want to talk about technologies that will enable us to change the way we power our homes and businesses, which is the second part of the strategy, the Advanced Energy Initiative strategy.

First of all, there's huge pressure on natural gas—people in Colorado know what I'm talking about. We've been using a lot of natural gas for the generation of electricity. And we got to change that. Natural gas is important for manufacturing. It's important for fertilizers. But to use it for electricity is causing enormous pressure, because we're not getting enough natural gas produced.

One way to alleviate [alleviate]\* the pressure on price is to expand the use of liquefied natural gas through new terminals. And I want to thank the Congress for passing new siting rights in the energy bill that will enable us to have more terminals for us to be able to receive liquefied natural gas from parts of the world that can produce it cheaply—

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\* White House correction.

liquefy it, and then ship it to the United States.

But the other way to take the price off of gas is to better use coal, nuclear power, solar, and wind energy. Now, when you hear people say coal, it causes people to shudder, because coal—it's hard to burn it. But we have got—we're spending about \$2 billion over a 10-year period to develop clean coal technologies. If technology can help the way we live, technology can certainly help change the way we utilize coal. And it's important that we spend money on new technologies so we can burn coal cleanly, because we got 250 years worth of coal reserves.

One way to take the pressure off natural gas is to use coal more efficiently. We believe by 2015, we'll have developed the first zero-emission coal-fire electricity plant. We're making progress. We're spending money; research is good. The American taxpayers have got to know that by spending money on this vital research, that we're going to be able to use our abundant sources of coal in an environmentally friendly way and help with your electricity bills.

Secondly, we've got to use nuclear power more effectively and more efficiently. We haven't built a plant since the 1970s. You're seeing now, France has built a lot of plants since the 1970s. They get about 85 percent of their electricity from nuclear power. And technology has changed dramatically, and I believe we can build plants in a safe way and, at the same time, generate cost-effective electricity that does not—that the process of which won't pollute.

And so we've begun to, in the energy bill, begun to provide incentives for the nuclear power industry to start siting plants. It just doesn't make any sense to me that we don't use this technology if we're interested in becoming less dependent on foreign sources of energy and we want to protect our environment.

And finally, solar and wind technologies. We're also going to talk about that. NREL is doing a lot of important work on solar and wind technology. The vision for solar is, one day, each home becomes a little power unit unto itself, that photovoltaic processes will enable you to become a little power generator, and that if you generate more power

than you use, you can feed it back into the grid.

I was, yesterday, in Michigan, and went to United Solar, and they've got some fantastic technologies. Dan was quick to remind me, others have fantastic technologies as well. *[Laughter]* I just hadn't seen them firsthand. But the American people need to know, with additional research dollars, which we're proposing to Congress, we're close to some important breakthroughs—to be able to use this technology to help folks power their homes by the Sun.

And finally, wind. We don't have a lot of turbines in Washington, but there's a lot of wind there, I can assure you of that. *[Laughter]* But there are parts of the country where there are turbines. They say to me that there's about 6 percent of the country that's perfectly suited for wind energy, and that if the technology is developed further, that it's possible we could generate up to 20 percent of our electricity needs through wind and turbine.

What I'm talking about is a comprehensive strategy. In other words, we're not relying upon one aspect of renewable energy to help this country become less dependent; we're talking about a variety of fronts. And we're willing to work with both the public sector and private sector to make sure that we achieve breakthroughs. And I'm fired up about it and so should the American people be. I mean, we're close to changing the way we live in an incredibly positive way. And therefore, I want to thank the folks at NREL for being a part of this exciting movement. It's got to be pretty interesting to be one of these guys working on how to make switch grass go to fuel. I mean, it's got to make you feel good about your work, because you're doing the country a great service.

And so with that in mind, I've asked Dan Arvizu to join us. He's the director of the NREL. That means he's—that means you're the boss? *[Laughter]*

**Dan Arvizu.** Only part of the time.

**The President.** Only part of the time.

**Mr. Arvizu.** Until I get home. *[Laughter]*

**The President.** Why don't you tell the folks—that's a smart man. *[Laughter]* Why don't you tell the folks what you do here so people can understand.

[At this point, Mr. Arvizu, director, National Renewable Energy Laboratory, made brief remarks.]

**The President.** I think what he's saying is, one of these days, we're going to take wood chips—[laughter]—put them through the factory, and it's going to be fuel you can put in your car. Is that right?

**Mr. Arvizu.** That's absolutely true. [Laughter]

**The President.** Stuff that would normally—[applause]. That's the difference between a Ph.D. and the C student. [Laughter]

**Mr. Arvizu.** I didn't want to say that.

**The President.** Yes, right. [Laughter] Anyway, keep going. [Laughter]

**Mr. Arvizu.** One of the other areas that we're tremendously excited by is photovoltaics. You mentioned the photovoltaics.

**The President.** Explain what photovoltaics are. I threw it out there as kind of, you know, showing off, but tell people what it means.

**Mr. Arvizu.** Photovoltaics is actually the direct conversion of sunlight to electricity through a semiconductor material, and it's essentially what we use in computers for chips that power those things. And to a large degree, it's a technology that's been around a long time, but it has become much closer to commercialization. Now, in high-value markets it is commercial today.

[Mr. Arvizu continued his remarks.]

**The President.** See, what's changed is, the global supply for fossil fuels is outstripping the—the global demand is outstripping the global supply. And so you're seeing a price of the feedstock of normal energy going up, and technology driving the price of alternatives down. And that's why this is a really interesting moment that we're going to see. It's changed a lot of thinking. The price of natural gas and the price of crude oil has absolutely made these competitive alternative sources of energy real. And the question is, do we have the technological breakthroughs to make it such that it can get to your gas tanks?

[Mr. Arvizu made further remarks.]

**The President.** Thank you, sir. Larry Burns, why don't you explain to folks what you do for a living.

**Lawrence D. Burns.** Well, I'm responsible for research and development and strategic planning for General Motors. And I've been doing that, working for General Motors, for 37 years, actually.

**The President.** Thirty-seven years?

**Mr. Burns.** Yes. I started out in kindergarten.

**The President.** Yes, I was going to say. [Laughter] You're obviously not in politics because your hair is not gray. [Laughter]

You know, it's interesting, I bet you people don't know this—a lot of people don't know—there are 4.5 million automobiles on the road today that can either burn gasoline or ethanol—called flex-fuel vehicles. Isn't that interesting? And people don't know that. In other words, the technology is available.

Pick it up from there. I'm trying to give you—[laughter].

[Mr. Burns, vice president of research and development and strategic planning, General Motors, made brief remarks.]

**The President.** Tell people what a flex-fuel vehicle is. What is it? Tell them what it is.

**Mr. Burns.** What it is, it's a vehicle that can burn both gasoline and E-85 ethanol. As you explained, it's 85 percent ethanol and 15 percent gasoline. So any mixture between gasoline and E-85, the vehicle can burn. And in fact, E-85 burns cleaner and yields higher horsepower than gasoline. It's renewable, and it can be homegrown. So we think it's an ideal fuel.

**The President.** Does it cost much—

**Mr. Burns.** Well, from a cost standpoint—

**The President.** —to make the engine—

**Mr. Burns.** No, no, actually not. It's a pretty straightforward thing for us to do. The fuel injectors in your engine have to be changed, but this is one of the reasons we can do it in high volume and give our customers the choice for—

**The President.** In other words, this isn't something that's going to be real expensive

to the consumer, if somebody wants a flex-fuel vehicle?

**Mr. Burns.** No, not in terms of the vehicle.

[*Mr. Burns continued his remarks.*]

**The President.** Yes, just one quick point—sorry to interrupt. But people are sitting there saying, “Well, okay, maybe you’ve manufactured the fuel from different sources, but do you have the automobiles to use it?” And the point is, the technology is already advanced. I mean, they’re out there, people on the road using it. So the question is, now, can we get the fuel manufactured close to where people are driving flex-fuel vehicles, or vice versa, so that we can get this technology expanded throughout the country? Go ahead.

[*Mr. Burns made further remarks.*]

**The President.** That’s great. We’re spending \$1.2 billion over a 5-year period on—or 10-year period for hydrogen research. I would warn folks that I think the hybrid battery and the ethanol technologies will precede hydrogen. Hydrogen is a longer-term opportunity. It’s going to take awhile for hydrogen automobiles to develop, plus the infrastructure necessary to make sure people can actually have convenience when it comes to filling up your car with hydrogen. But nevertheless, I’m pleased to hear that GM is like—joining the Federal Government on the leading edge of technological change.

**Mr. Burns.** The important part about that battery, too, is it’s a stepping stone to the fuel-cell vehicle. We’ll imagine our fuel-cell vehicles will have some form of storing energy, because as your car slows down, you want to capture that energy and store it. So it’s not like we’re making one investment here that doesn’t help another one. They all come together—the ethanol, the batteries, and the fuel cells are really one in the same roadmap to get to the future that offers a lot of alternatives for our Nation.

**The President.** Great. Thanks for joining us.

**Mr. Burns.** Thank you.

**The President.** Patty Stulp.

**Patty Stulp.** Hi. Good morning, Mr. President.

**The President.** You’ve got an interesting business.

**Ms. Stulp.** I do, thank you. I blend ethanol for gasoline refiner.

**The President.** You blend ethanol for a gasoline refinery.

**Ms. Stulp.** Would you like me to tell you about it?

**The President.** I wish you would. [*Laughter*] Please don’t ask me to tell you about it. [*Laughter*]

**Ms. Stulp.** I’ve been involved in the ethanol industry for over 20 years. I grew up on a farm in Yuma County. I need to point out that Yuma County is the number one corn-producing county in the Nation most years. I’m a fourth generation—

**The President.** Number one corn-producing county in the country.

**Ms. Stulp.** It’s in Colorado.

**The President.** Really?

**Ms. Stulp.** We grow a lot of corn, about—

**The President.** That’s not what they told me in Iowa, but that’s all right. [*Laughter*] I believe you.

[*Ms. Stulp, president, Ethanol Management Co., made brief remarks.*]

**The President.** Well said. Our economy—a strong economy is one that needs a good farm economy. And the more markets there are for our farmers, the stronger the economy is going to be. And ethanol is just another market.

**Ms. Stulp.** Mr. President, we really appreciate your support of this program.

**The President.** Well, listen, it makes sense. Anybody who doesn’t support it doesn’t quite understand the problems we face. But thanks. Good job. You’re a pioneer yourself.

**Ms. Stulp.** Thank you.

**The President.** Colorado is famous for pioneers. [*Laughter*] Bill Frey, straight out of Delaware, is that right?

**Bill Frey.** Straight out of Delaware, yes.

**The President.** Welcome.

**Mr. Frey.** Thank you.

**The President.** Tell people what you do.

[*Mr. Frey, global business director, DuPont Biobased Materials, made brief remarks.*]

**The President.** Are you dedicating a lot of dollars to research and development? I know you are in general, but how about to alternative sources of energy?

**Mr. Frey.** Absolutely. Absolutely. And we're doing it in two regards—most of the discussion so far has been around the issue of fuels as an output. We do a lot of work in terms of using cellulose-based or using corn-based raw materials to make materials as well.

[Mr. Frey continued his remarks.]

**The President.** Good. Let's see what I can ask you here. [Laughter] What is your relationship—what is the nature of the relationship with NREL? When you say you work with NREL, tell people how the private sector and Government entities interface.

**Mr. Frey.** So everyone—people have mentioned bio-refinery—I think probably everyone so far has mentioned bio-refinery—and we're working very closely with NREL—NREL, of course, has had a number of years of being in the space looking at renewable energy, doing a lot of the foundation work that allows us to now look at how we're going to commercialize cellulose. So we're doing a lot of work in the area of bio-refinery with NREL, looking at how we can take a process which, today, has challenges associated with the economics of doing it, so it's an issue of economic. It's not a technology issue; the technology works. It's the economics of that technology. So we're spending a lot of time on trying to solve those problems.

**The President.** Do you have people here from your company coming—

**Mr. Frey.** Actually, there are people meeting today offsite, because of this particular event. [Laughter]

**The President.** I said I was a pain. Look, I said it up front. [Laughter]

[Mr. Frey made further remarks.]

**The President.** Part of it's the process of converting the switch grass to fuel, and part of it's to make sure the manufacturing process yields a cost-effective product. And that's a lot of what you're discussing, which is important.

**Mr. Frey.** And it's important, I think, also, for a lot of the constituents to know that

there isn't an either/or situation as it relates to the type of work that we're doing with cellulose. There's some confusion at times, as to is cellulosic going to take the place of corn-based ethanol, and of course, it's not going to at all.

**The President.** The answer is, no. We have plenty of demand. I mean, there's going to be a lot of cars. We've only got 4.5 million cars—what are there, 220 million cars in America? And by the way, just to make sure everybody's expectations are set, our fleet is not going to change overnight. It takes awhile. When you get new technologies available for people to buy—hybrid vehicles or flex-fuel vehicles—it takes awhile to change a 220-million car fleet to a modern fleet.

And so what we're talking about is an evolution, so people don't have the expectations that overnight, there's going to be millions of people driving hybrid vehicles or—we want them to be. It's just going to—from a practical perspective, it takes awhile. Thanks.

[Mr. Frey made further remarks.]

**The President.** I think the Nation—part of this deal today is to help develop national will. Most Americans understand the problems. And so good, thanks for joining. You did a fine job. Tell them back—hello there in Delaware.

**Mr. Frey.** All right. I'm sure they're watching so—

**The President.** They're watching. Well, give them a wave.

**Mr. Frey.** Okay. [Laughter]

**The President.** Lori Vaclavik.

**Lori Vaclavik.** Vaclavik.

**The President.** Vaclavik. It's a very—you're an interesting addition to the panel. Besides being a fine person, tell people what you do. I think people will find this interesting.

[Ms. Vaclavik, executive director, Habitat for Humanity of Metro Denver, made brief remarks.]

**The President.** Great, thanks—well-spoken. If anybody in the Denver area wants to contribute to help somebody's life be better life, join Habitat for Humanity. I mean, it's—if you want to—the truth of the matter is, I was just thinking about—we're talking



about power and power sources and everything; the true power of the country is the hearts and souls of citizens who volunteer to help change people's lives. So, thanks. Beautiful statement—using some technology to help somebody. But you're right; the great source of inspiration is the fact that we got a new homeowner. Yes, that's neat.

Welcome. Dale, step forth. *[Laughter]*

**Dale Gardner.** I'm here, sir.

**The President.** Good. Reporting for duty. Are you gainfully employed?

**Mr. Gardner.** I am. *[Laughter]* As long as you're kind to my boss, Mr. President. *[Laughter]*

**The President.** As long as Congress quits earmarking, anyway.

**Mr. Gardner.** Well, we could talk about that too. *[Laughter]* I am here at NREL, but I directly support the hydrogen program back at the Department of Energy.

**The President.** Great.

*[Mr. Gardner, associate lab director for systems integration, National Renewable Energy Laboratory, made brief remarks.]*

**The President.** So, like if you got a 2-year-old child, when the person gets to be 12, maybe thinking about driving a car, all of a sudden, the technology becomes more real—pretty close. For a guy 59, 10 years is a lot. *[Laughter]* If you're 2, it's not all that much. *[Laughter]* It's conceivable that a 2-year-old today could be taking a driver's test in a hydrogen-powered automobile.

Keep going.

**Mr. Gardner.** So here's what we're doing. The major technological challenges—I can boil them up into three areas. There are many, but here is a good way to think about it. The first is production of hydrogen. Hydrogen, even though it's the most common element in the universe, here on Earth, it's not found freely. It's bound up into these larger molecules and, therefore, it takes us energy and dollars to break it free. So that's the main thing.

**The President.** One reason why we need to expand nuclear power is to be able to help manufacture ample quantities of hydrogen to help change the way we live.

**Mr. Gardner.** That's exactly right. We can take that electricity from a nuclear power-

plant, electrolyze water, which just means break the hydrogen free from the oxygen, and then have it for a fuel source. So production is one of our big goals. And the goal there, of course, is to make the cost of the hydrogen competitive with gasoline today; otherwise, you and I won't want to buy it at the filling station.

**The President.** Correct.

**Mr. Gardner.** The second area is storage. This is really an interesting one. Because hydrogen is the simplest element, it has the complexity that affects us in terms of using hydrogen in vehicles. We have to go put hydrogen in a tank, just as we do gasoline. Well, because it's so light and its density is so low, it's really hard to pack enough of it into a tank that's not the size of your whole trunk, such that we can get 300 miles down the road. And for Larry to sell a car to one of us, we want to go at least 300 miles more, especially when you're driving in Texas—a long way between filling stations. *[Laughter]*

**The President.** Yes. And we want more than one seat in the automobile. *[Laughter]*

*[Mr. Gardner made further remarks.]*

**The President.** So you've been looking at this for 3 years. Is this like science fiction, or are we talking about something that you think will come to fruition?

**Mr. Gardner.** This is going to happen.

**The President.** Pretty exciting, isn't it?

**Mr. Gardner.** It's going to be out in the middle of the century. It's not going to be something that's going to happen in the next 15 or 20 years, but it's going to be the way our kids and our grandkids view the energy structure of our country. It's very exciting work.

**The President.** In 1981, I don't think anybody ever thought there would be such a thing as e-mail. Matter of fact, we were still writing letters longhand, if I recall. Typewriters were kind of the—now it's computer. It's amazing what research and development can do to the way we live; pay phones to cell phones in 20 years. I think what we're hearing is change of lifestyle in incredibly important ways in the research that's taking place.

You can't have—we live in an instant gratification world, so we got to be wise about

how we make investments. Part of the strategy is intermediate term, part of the strategy is long term. And thanks for explaining an important long-term strategy. You did a fine job, kind of boiled it down, simplified it—point one, two, three. *[Laughter]*

**Mr. Gardner.** I heard what you said today on——

**The President.** That's good, yes. Thank you for joining us. Thanks for your work on that.

Finally, Pat Vincent, the president and CEO of——

**Patricia K. Vincent.** Public Service Company of Colorado.

**The President.** Great. Thanks for joining us.

**Ms. Vincent.** Thank you.

**The President.** You have a vested interest in all this.

*[Ms. Vincent, president and chief executive officer, Public Service Co. of Colorado, made brief remarks.]*

**The President.** First let me—before you—what is the main source of your power today?

**Ms. Vincent.** It's a mix between coal and natural gas.

**The President.** Coal—right, right—50-50?

**Ms. Vincent.** We have some nuclear in Minnesota, depends on the State. Here in Colorado, it's predominantly natural gas.

**The President.** And what States do you cover?

**Ms. Vincent.** We cover 10 States. We cover the panhandle of Texas.

**The President.** Do you?

**Ms. Vincent.** We do. Oklahoma——

**The President.** People paying their bills down there? *[Laughter]*

**Ms. Vincent.** They are—they are.

**The President.** That's good. A fine part of the country, I want to you know. Well, you don't need to name them all, a 10-State area.

**Ms. Vincent.** Yes, 10 States.

**The President.** And you're based where?

**Ms. Vincent.** I'm based here in Denver, and this is our largest utility company here—is in Colorado. And we have a wind source program that's been around since 1998.

*[Ms. Vincent continued her remarks.]*

**The President.** So like when you analyze the wind turbine technology, is it advancing rapidly? Is there more advances being made—or am I getting you out of your lane here?

**Ms. Vincent.** No, it's advancing rapidly. And what we're finding is like Dan talked about, the demand for solar—is that the demand for the turbines is starting to outstrip the supply. And a lot of it's going overseas. The production tax credit really helps us here because it kind of goes in boom and bust cycles, so that has really helped us levelize the demand and make them commercially feasible. And people like GE are making big strides in wind technology.

**The President.** Good.

**Ms. Vincent.** Second programs we have are with NREL, and we have two. And the first one is a wind to hydrogen program. And I don't know about your experience with wind, but it does blow intermittently here in Colorado and——

**The President.** It does in Washington too. *[Laughter]*

**Ms. Vincent.** I wasn't sure if it was all the time or just intermittently.

**The President.** Lately, all the time. *[Laughter]*

*[Ms. Vincent made further remarks.]*

**The President.** By the way, this may interest you if you are—these people manufacturing photovoltaic products can't make enough. I mean, the demand for these things is huge. And there's just not enough capacity. The plant we were at yesterday is going to double in size. They're making neat roofing materials, by the way. I'm not their marketing guy—*[laughter]*—just happens to be on my mind. What's interesting about the discussion is the utility industry needs alternative sources of energy in order for them to be able to do their job. I think that's what you're saying.

**Ms. Vincent.** Yes, and it's good for our customers. It's good for the communities; it's good for us——

**The President.** Absolutely.

**Ms. Vincent.** ——our shareholders.

**The President.** It's good for your customers; it's good for you.

**Ms. Vincent.** Yes.

**The President.** And I know you feel that way. Managing peak electricity loads with alternative sources of energy makes a lot of sense.

**Ms. Vincent.** Yes, it does.

**The President.** Good. You did a fine job.

**Ms. Vincent.** Thank you.

**The President.** So that's why we're here, to talk about a variety of options to achieve a great national goal. And there's no doubt in my mind we're going to achieve it. And it's exciting. It's exciting times to be involved with all aspects of this strategy. And you heard some of our fellow citizens describe to you what they're doing to be a part of this giant effort to change the way we live, so that future generations of Americans will look back at this period and say, "Thank goodness there was yet another generation of pioneers and entrepreneurs willing to think differently on behalf of the country."

Thanks for coming. God bless. Good job.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:19 a.m. at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Charles J. Baroch of Golden, CO; Colorado State Senator Andy McElhany; and Joe Stengel, minority leader, Colorado State House of Representatives. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Interview With Reporters Aboard Air Force One

February 21, 2006

**The President.** Thank you all for coming. A couple of points I want to make to you. First, I'm excited about the energy initiative. American people are beginning to see that we've made good progress on research and development. We've got more to do. We're close to some breakthroughs that will achieve an economic and national security objective.

And I've enjoyed traveling around and talking to these scientists and engineers that are really excited about how close we are to some technological breakthroughs. Today, talking to the two scientists involved with the cellulosic ethanol project was exciting. These guys are pretty fired up about it all,

and they realize we've got a chance to change our driving habits.

I do want to talk about this port issue. A foreign company manages some of our ports. They've entered into a transaction with another foreign company to manage our ports. This is a process that has been extensively reviewed, particularly from the point of view as to whether or not I can say to the American people, "This project will not jeopardize our security." It's been looked at by those who have been charged with the security of our country. And I believe the deal should go forward. This company operates all around the world. I have the list somewhere. We can get you the list. They're in Germany and elsewhere—Australia.

They—in working with our folks, they've agreed to make sure that their coordination with our security folks is good and solid. I really don't understand why it's okay for a British company to operate our ports but not a company from the Middle East, when our experts are convinced that port security is not an issue; that having worked with this company, they're convinced that these—they'll work with those who are in charge of the U.S. Government's responsibility for securing the ports—they'll work hand in glove. I want to remind people that when we first put out the Container Security Initiative, the CSI, which was a new way to secure our ports, UAE was one of the first countries to sign up.

In other words, we're receiving goods from ports out of the UAE as well as where this company operates. And so I, after careful review of our Government, I believe the Government ought to go forward. And I want those who are questioning it to step up and explain why all of a sudden a Middle Eastern company is held to a different standard than a Great—British company. I'm trying to conduct foreign policy now by saying to people of the world, "We'll treat you fairly." And after careful scrutiny, we believe this deal is a legitimate deal that will not jeopardize the security of the country and, at the same time, send that signal that we're willing to treat people fairly.

Thirdly, I'm looking forward to my speech tomorrow about my trip to India and Pakistan. It's going to be an important trip, one

where we'll work on a variety of issues with both countries—security, prosperity, and trade—working with India, of course, on energy security. It will be an important trip.

I'll answer some questions, and then we're getting ready to land.

#### **Dubai Ports World/Homeland Security**

**Q.** Mr. President, leaders in Congress, including Senator Frist, have said that they'll take action to stop the port control shift if you don't reverse course on it. You've expressed your thoughts here, but what do you say to those in Congress who plan to take legislative action?

**The President.** They ought to listen to what I have to say about this. They ought to look at the facts and understand the consequences of what they're going to do. But if they pass a law, I'll deal with it, with a veto.

#### **Crude Oil Supply/Middle East**

**Q.** Mr. President, on energy and foreign policy, some Saudi officials have said they're unhappy with being targeted about Middle Eastern oil, saying that you wanted to reduce dependence on Middle East oil. You've got a close relationship with King Abdullah.

**The President.** I do.

**Q.** He's been to see you. Have you heard something directly, yourself, from the Saudis?

**The President.** No, I haven't talked to His Majesty, but if I did, I would say, I hope you can understand that the relationship between supply and demand is so tight that any disruption on the supply side of energy causes our prices to go up, and spiking prices hurts our economy. And secondly, there are parts of the world where people would—that don't agree with our policy, namely Iran, for example. And that it's not in our interest to be dependent, when it comes to our economic security, and for that matter, national security, in a market that is volatile. And so hopefully he'll understand.

**Q.** So you don't think they should take offense at the comments about Middle Eastern oil?

**The President.** I would think that he would be understanding that new technologies will enable us to diversify away from

our reliance upon crude oil. As a matter of fact, it's not only a message for the United States; that's also a message for India and China. In order for these growing economies to be able to be competitive, they're going to have to learn how to use technologies that will enable them to meet the needs of their people, but also the international demands of the world for good environment, for example. The Nuclear Energy Initiative I'll be talking to the Indians about is an important initiative.

#### **Dubai Ports World/Homeland Security**

**Q.** The understatement today, and one of the concerns of lawmakers seems to be that they want more of a briefing, and they want more details about the things that you know, that have given you confidence that there aren't any national security implications with the port deal. Are you willing to either have your staff or to give any kind of briefing to leaders of Congress—

**The President.** Look at the company's record, Jim [Jim VandeHei, Washington Post], and it's clear for everybody to see. We've looked at the ports in which they've operated. There is a standard process mandated by Congress that we go through, called the CFIUS process. I'm not exactly sure if there's any national security concerns in briefing Congress. I just don't know. I can't answer your question.

**Q.** It seems like—you've already heard from different administration officials, saying, not in as strong terms as you have today, that there aren't problems with this deal, that the deal should go forward. But they seem to want more of a briefing. Would you be willing to give any additional briefings, either—

**The President.** We'll be glad to send—

**Q.** —either in a classified basis or—

**The President.** I don't see why not. Again, you're asking—I need to make sure I understand exactly what they're asking for.

Yes. Oh, you're not the press.

**Counselor to the President Dan Bartlett.** I could ask a question. You showed some strong leadership today—[laughter].

**Q.** Why is it so important to you, sir, that you take on this issue as a political fight? Clearly, there's bipartisan—

**The President.** I don't view it as a political fight. So do you want to start your question over? I view it as a good policy.

**Q.** Why is it—clearly—

**The President.** Are you talking about the energy issue?

**Q.** No, I'm sorry, the ports issue.

**The President.** It's not a political issue.

**Q.** But there clearly are members of your own party who will go to the mat against you on this.

**The President.** It's not a political issue.

**Q.** Why are you—to make this, to have this fight?

**The President.** I don't view it as a fight. I view it as me saying to people what I think is right, the right policy.

**Q.** What's the larger message that you're conveying by sticking to this UAE contract, by saying that you're not going to budge on this or you don't want to change policy?

**The President.** There is a process in place where we analyze—where the Government analyzes many, many business transactions to make sure they meet national security concerns. And I'm sure if you—careful review, this process yielded a result that said, yes, a deal should go forward.

One of my concerns, however, is mixed messages. And the message is, "It's okay for a British company, but a Middle Eastern company—maybe we ought not to deal the same way." It's a mixed message. You put interesting words in your question, but I just view—my job is to do what I think is right for the country. I don't intend to have a fight. If there's a fight, there is one but—nor do I view this as a political issue.

**Q.** I say it because you said you'd be willing to use the veto on it.

**The President.** I would. That's one of the tools the President has to indicate to the legislative branch his intentions. A veto doesn't mean fight or politics; it's just one of the tools I've got. I say veto, by the way, quite frequently in messages to Congress.

#### ***Palestinian Government/Hamas***

**Q.** Mr. President, Israel is halting payments to the Palestinians—the tax monies. What do you think about that, and what is the next step?

**The President.** I'll just give you our Government's position, and that is, we have said that—well, first of all, the U.S. Government doesn't give direct grants to Palestine. We go through the Palestinian Authority. We go through—we give grants through NGOs from our USAID, to help people. But my statement still stands, that so long as Hamas does not recognize Israel's right to exist, my view is, we don't have a partner in peace and, therefore, shouldn't fund a Government that is not a partner in peace. I thought the elections were important. I was one voice that said the elections should go forward on time.

But I recognized that, one, elections are the first step in many cases in evolution of a true democracy; and secondly, that elections show—give everybody a true look at how—what people are thinking on the street; and thirdly, though, that because the Palestinians spoke, doesn't necessarily mean we have to agree with the nature of—the party elected. And the party elected has said, "We're for the destruction of Israel." And our policy is, two states living side by side in peace. And therefore, it's hard to have a state living side by side in peace when your stated objective is the destruction of one of the states. So my policy still stands, what I said day one after the Hamas elections.

#### ***Medicare Reform***

**Q.** Can I ask you about a domestic issue, the prescription drug benefit plan? A lot of Democrats are on recess, and they want to make a big campaign issue out of this this year. What makes you think that the problems that this program being rolled out has had are something other than just the glitches that you've described?

**The President.** I'm glad that they're making this an issue. This is—the reforms that we passed in the Medicare law were necessary and are going to change people's lives in a positive way. And I look forward to talking about this issue next fall, if that's one of the issues they want to talk about, because I understand the impact that this law is going to have on seniors. And millions have signed up, and millions are realizing the benefit of this program. And so it's—we have done the right thing in passing this law. Seniors are given different options. Seniors are going to

get an extraordinarily good drug benefit. We have helped modernize Medicare. And looking forward to talking about it.

Good.

**Press Secretary Scott McClellan.** Thank you all.

**The President.** Pleasant experience working with you all.

NOTE: The interview began at 2:42 p.m. en route from Golden, CO, to Andrews Air Force Base, MD. In his interview, the President referred to King Abdallah of Saudi Arabia. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

## Remarks on Arrival From Golden, Colorado

February 21, 2006

### Dubai Ports World

I've just come back from a really good trip to the Midwest and the West talking about our need to change how we use energy—very encouraged by the technology that I saw and inspired by the scientists and engineers that are working on these new technologies.

And I also want to address another issue I just talked to the press about on Air Force One, and that is this issue of a company out of the UAE purchasing the right to manage some ports in the United States from a British company. First of all, this is a private transaction. But it—according to law, the Government is required to make sure this transaction does not, in any way, jeopardize the security of the country. And so people responsible in our Government have reviewed this transaction.

The transaction should go forward, in my judgment. If there was any chance that this transaction would jeopardize the security of the United States, it would not go forward. The company has been cooperative with the United States Government. The company will not manage port security. The security of our ports will be—continue to be managed by the Coast Guard and Customs. The company is from a country that has been cooperative in the war on terror, been an ally in the war on terror. The company operates ports in different countries around the world, ports

from which cargo has been sent to the United States on a regular basis.

I think it sends a terrible signal to friends around the world that it's okay for a company from one country to manage the port but not a country that plays by the rules and has got a good track record from another part of the world, can't manage the port.

And so, look, I can understand why some in Congress have raised questions about whether or not our country will be less secure as a result of this transaction. But they need to know that our Government has looked at this issue and looked at it carefully. Again, I repeat, if there was any question as to whether or not this country would be less safe as a result of the transaction, it wouldn't go forward. But I also want to repeat something again, and that is, this is a company that has played by the rules, that has been cooperative with the United States, a country that's an ally in the war on terror, and it would send a terrible signal to friends and allies not to let this transaction go through.

I want to thank you for your interest in the subject.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:50 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

## Remarks to the Asia Society

February 22, 2006

Thank you all. Madam President—it's got a nice ring to it. [*Laughter*] Thank you for your kind introduction; thank you for inviting me here. I'm honored to be here with the members of the Asia Society as you celebrate your 50th anniversary.

I came here today to talk about America's relationship with two key nations in Asia: India and Pakistan. These nations are undergoing great changes, and those changes are being felt all across the world. More than five centuries ago, Christopher Columbus set out for India and proved the world was round. Now some look at India's growing economy and say that that proves that the world is flat. [*Laughter*] No matter how you look at the world, our relationship with these countries are important. They're important for our economic security, and they're important for our national security.

I look forward to meeting with Prime Minister Singh in India and President Musharraf in Pakistan. We will discuss ways that our nations can work together to make our world safer and more prosperous by fighting terrorism, advancing democracy, expanding free and fair trade, and meeting our common energy needs in a responsible way.

I appreciate Ambassador Holbrooke. I appreciate your service to our country. Thanks for being the chairman of the Asia Society. Leo Daly is the chairman of the Asia Society of Washington. Leo, thank you. It's good to see you.

I appreciate the members of the diplomatic corps that have joined us today, in particular, Ambassador Sen from India and Ambassador Karamet from Pakistan. Thanks for taking time out of your busy schedules to come and hear the President give a talk.

Fifty years ago, many Asian nations were still colonies; today, Asians are in charge of their own destinies. Fifty years ago, there were only a handful of democracies in Asia; today, there are nearly a dozen. Fifty years ago, most of Asia was mired in hopeless poverty; today, its economies are engines of prosperity. These changes have been dramatic, and as the Asian continent grows in freedom and opportunity, it will be a source of peace and stability and prosperity for all the world.

The transformation of Asia is beginning to improve the lives of citizens in India and Pakistan, and the United States welcomes this development. The United States has not always enjoyed close relations with Pakistan and India. In the past, the cold war and regional tensions kept us apart, but today, our interests and values are bringing us closer together. We share a common interest in promoting open economies that creates jobs and opportunities for our people. We have acted on common values to deliver compassionate assistance to people who have been devastated by natural disasters. And we face a common threat in Islamic extremism. Today I'm going to discuss America's long-term interests and goals in this important part of the world and how the United States can work together with India and Pakistan to achieve them.

The first stop on my trip will be India. India is the world's largest democracy. It is

home to more than a billion people—that's more than three times the population of the United States. Like our own country, India has many different ethnic groups and religious traditions. India has a Hindu majority and about 150 million Muslims in that country. That's more than in any other country except Indonesia and Pakistan. India's Government reflects its diversity. India has a Muslim President and a Sikh Prime Minister. I look forward to meeting with both of them. India is a good example of how freedom can help different people live together in peace. And this commitment to secular government and religious pluralism makes India a natural partner for the United States.

In my meetings with Prime Minister Singh, we'll discuss ways to advance the strategic partnership that we announced last July. Through this partnership, the United States and India are cooperating in five broad areas.

First, the United States and India are working together to defeat the threat of terrorism. Like the American people, the people of India have suffered directly from terrorist attacks on their home soil. To defeat the terrorists, our intelligence and law enforcement agencies are cooperating on a regular basis to make air travel more secure, increase the security of cyberspace, and prevent bioterrorist attacks. Our two Governments are sharing vital information on suspected terrorists and potential threats, and these cooperative efforts will make the Indian Government more effective as a partner in the global war on terror and will make the people in both our countries more secure.

Secondly, the United States and India are working together to support democracy around the world. Like America, India overcame colonialism to establish a free and independent nation. President Franklin Roosevelt supported India in its quest for democracy, and now our two nations are helping other nations realize the same dream.

Last year we launched the Global Democracy Initiative, which is a joint venture between India and the United States to promote democracy and development across the world. Under this initiative, India and the United States have taken leadership roles in

advancing the United Nations Democracy Fund. The fund will provide grants to governments and civil institutions and international organizations to help them administer elections, fight corruption, and build the rule of law in emergency democracy—in emerging democracies. We're also encouraging India to work directly with other nations that will benefit from India's experience of building a multiethnic democracy that respects the rights of religious minorities.

India's work in Afghanistan is a good example of India's commitment to emerging democracies. India has pledged \$565 million to help the Afghan people repair the infrastructure and get back on their feet. And recently, India announced it would provide an additional \$50 million to help the Afghans complete their National Assembly building. India has trained National Assembly staff, and it's developing a similar program for the Assembly's elected leaders. The people of America and India understand that a key part of defeating the terrorists is to replace their ideology of hatred with an ideology of hope. And so we will continue to work together to advance the cause of liberty.

Third, the United States and India are working together to promote global prosperity through free and fair trade. America's economic relationship with India is strong, and it's getting better. Last year, our exports to India grew by more than 30 percent. We had a trade surplus of \$1.8 billion in services. India is now one of the fastest-growing markets for American exports, and the growing economic ties between our two nations are making American companies more competitive in the global marketplace. And that's helping companies create good jobs here in America.

The growing affluence of India is a positive development for our country. America accounts for 5 percent of the world's population. That means 95 percent of our potential customers live outside our borders. More than a billion of them live in India. We welcome the growing prosperity of the Indian people and the potential market it offers for America's goods and services.

When trade is free and fair, it benefits all sides. At the end of World War II, the United States chose to help Germany and Japan re-

cover. America understood then that as other nations prosper, their growing wealth brings greater stability to their regions and more opportunities for products Americans manufacture and grow. The same is true today with developing nations such as India. As India's economy expands, it means a better life for the Indian people and greater stability for the region. It means a bigger market for America's businesses and workers and farmers.

The area of America's relationship with India that seems to receive the most attention is outsourcing. It's true that a number of Americans have lost jobs because companies have shifted operations to India. And losing a job is traumatic. It's difficult. It puts a strain on our families. But rather than respond with protectionist policies, I believe it makes sense to respond with educational policies to make sure that our workers are skilled for the jobs of the 21st century.

We must also recognize that India's growth is creating new opportunities for our businesses and farmers and workers. India's middle class is now estimated at 300 million people. Think about that. That's greater than the entire population of the United States. India's middle class is buying air-conditioners, kitchen appliances, and washing machines, and a lot of them from American companies like GE and Whirlpool and Westinghouse. And that means their job base is growing here in the United States of America. Younger Indians are acquiring a taste for pizzas from Domino's—[laughter]—Pizza Hut. And Air India ordered 68 planes valued at more than \$11 billion from Boeing, the single largest commercial airplane order in India's civilian aviation history. Today, India's consumers associate American brands with quality and value, and this trade is creating opportunity here at home.

Americans also benefit when U.S. companies establish research centers to tap into India's educated workforce. This investment makes American companies more competitive globally. It lowers the cost for American consumers. Texas Instruments is a good example. Today, Texas Instruments employs 16,000 workers in America. It gets more than



80 percent of its revenues from sales overseas. More than 20 years ago, Texas Instruments opened a center in Bangalore, which is India's Silicon Valley. They did so to assist in analog chip design and digital chip design and related software development. The company says that their research centers in countries like India allow them to run their design efforts around the clock. They bring additional brainpower to help solve problems and provide executives in the United States with critical information about the needs of their consumers and customers overseas.

These research centers help Texas Instruments to get their products to market faster. It helps Texas Instruments become more competitive in a competitive world. It makes sense. The research centers are good for India, and they're good for workers here in the United States.

In the past decade, India has made dramatic progress in opening its markets to foreign trade and investment, but there's more work to be done. India needs to continue to lift its caps on foreign investment, to make its rules and regulations more transparent, and to continue to lower its tariffs and open its markets to American agricultural products, industrial goods, and services. We'll continue to work for agreements on these economic and regulatory reforms to ensure that America's goods and services are treated fairly. My attitude is this: If the rules are fair, I believe our companies and our farmers and our entrepreneurs can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere.

India is an important—is a market for our products. India is also important as a partner in opening up world markets. As a new nation, India emphasized self-sufficiency and adopted strong protectionist policies. During this period, its economy stagnated and poverty grew. India now recognizes that a brighter future for its people depends on a free and fair global trading order. Today, the Doha round of trade talks at the World Trade Organization provides the greatest opportunity to lift hundreds of millions of people out of poverty and to boost economic growth across the world. The WTO members' aim is to complete the Doha round by the end of this year. India has played an important leadership role in the Doha talks, and we

look to India to continue to lead as we work together for an ambitious agreement on services and manufacturing and agriculture.

Fourth, the United States and India are working together to improve human health and the environment and address the issue of climate change. So we've joined together to create the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate. Together with Australia and China and Japan and South Korea, we will focus on practical ways to make the best practices and latest energy technologies available to all—things like—technologies like zero-emission, coal-fired plants. As nations across the region adopt these practices and technologies, they will make their factories and powerplants cleaner and more efficient. We look forward to being an active partner in this partnership.

Fifth, the United States and India will work together to help India meet its energy needs in a practical and responsible way. That means addressing three key issues: oil, electricity, and the need to bring India's nuclear power program under international norms and safeguards.

India now imports more than two-thirds of its oil. As the economy—as its economy grows, which we're confident it will, it will need even more oil. The increased demand from developing nations like India is one of the reasons the global demand for oil has been rising faster than global supply. Rising demand relative to global supply leads to price increases for all of us.

To meet the challenge here in America, I have proposed what's called an Advanced Energy Initiative to make this company [country]<sup>\*</sup> less reliant upon oil. As I said in the State of the Union, "We've got a problem; we're hooked on oil." And we need to do something about it.

And so we're spending money on research and development to develop cleaner and more reliable alternatives to oil, alternatives that will work, alternatives such as hybrid vehicles that will require much less gasoline, alternatives such as new fuels to substitute for gasoline, and alternatives such as using hydrogen to power automobiles. We will share these promising energy technologies

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<sup>\*</sup> White House correction.

with countries like India. And as we do so, it will help reduce stress on global oil markets and move our world toward cleaner and more efficient uses of energy.

India's rising economy is also creating greater demand for electricity. Nuclear power is a clean and reliable way to help meet this need. Nuclear power now accounts for nearly 3 percent of India's electricity needs, and India plans to increase the figure by—to 25 percent by 2050. And America wants to help.

My administration has announced a new proposal called the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership. Under this partnership, America will work with nations that have advanced civilian nuclear energy programs—such as Great Britain, France, Japan, and Russia—to share nuclear fuel with nations like India that are developing civilian nuclear energy programs. The supplier nations will collect the spent nuclear fuel, and the supplier nations will invest in new methods to reprocess the spent nuclear fuel so that it can be used for advanced new reactors. The strategy will allow countries like India to produce more electricity from nuclear power; it will enable countries like India to rely less on fossil fuels; it will decrease the amount of nuclear waste that needs to be stored and reduce the risk of nuclear proliferation.

To benefit from this initiative, India first needs to bring its civilian energy programs under the same international safeguards that govern nuclear power programs in other countries. And India and the United States took a bold step forward last summer when we agreed to a civil nuclear initiative that will provide India access to civilian nuclear technology and bring its civilian programs under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

This is not an easy decision for India, nor is it an easy decision for the United States, and implementing this agreement will take time, and it will take patience from both our countries. I'll continue to encourage India to produce a credible, transparent, and defensible plan to separate its civilian and military nuclear programs. By following through on our commitments, we'll bring India's civilian—civil nuclear program into international

mainstream and strengthen the bonds of trust between our two great nations.

We have an ambitious agenda with India. Our agenda is also practical. It builds on a relationship that has never been better. India is a global leader as well as a good friend, and I look forward to working with Prime Minister Singh to address other difficult problems such as HIV/AIDS, pandemic flu, and the challenge posed by Iran's nuclear ambitions. My trip will remind everybody about the strengthening of a important strategic partnership. We'll work together in practical ways to promote a hopeful future for citizens in both our nations.

The second stop of my trip will be to Pakistan. Pakistan is a key ally in the war on terror. Pakistan is a nation of 162 million people. It has come a long way in a short period of time. Five years ago, Pakistan was one of only three nations that recognized the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. That all changed after September the 11th. President Musharraf understood that he had to make a fundamental choice for his people. He could turn a blind eye and leave his people hostage to terrorists, or he could join the free world in fighting the terrorists. President Musharraf made the right choice, and the United States of America is grateful for his leadership.

Within 2 days of the attack, the Pakistani Government committed itself to stop Al Qaida operatives at its border, share intelligence on terrorist activities and movements, and break off all ties with the Taliban Government in Kabul if it refused to hand over bin Laden and the Al Qaida leadership. President Musharraf's decision to fight the terrorists was made at great personal risk. He leads a country that the terrorists seek to use as a base of operations, and they take advantage of every opportunity to create chaos and destabilize the country. The terrorists have tried to assassinate President Musharraf on a number of occasions, because they know he stands in the way of their hateful vision for his country. He is a man of courage, and I appreciate his friendship and his leadership.

Pakistan now has the opportunity to write a new chapter in its history, and the United States wants to build a broad and lasting strategic partnership with the people of Pakistan.

And in my meetings with President Musharraf, we'll be discussing areas that are critical to the American-Pakistan relationship.

First, the United States and Pakistan will continue our close cooperation in confronting and defeating the terrorists in the war on terror. Second, the United States and Pakistan understand that in the long run, the only way to defeat the terrorists is through democracy.

Pakistan still has a distance to travel on the road to democracy, yet it has some fundamental institutions that a democracy requires. Pakistan has a lively and generally free press. I'm confident I will hear from them on my trip to Pakistan. *[Laughter]* Occasionally, there's interference by security forces, but it's a strong press. Pakistanis are free to criticize their Government, and they exercise that right vigorously. There are a number of political parties and movements that regularly challenge the Government. President Musharraf remains committed to a moderate state that respects the role of Islam in Pakistani society while providing an alternative to Islamic radicalism. The United States will continue to work with Pakistan to strengthen the institutions that help guarantee civil liberties and help lay the foundations for a democratic future for the Pakistani people.

The United States and Pakistan both want the elections scheduled for next year to be successful. This will be an important test of Pakistan's commitment to democratic reform, and the Government in Islamabad must ensure that these elections are open and free and fair. The Pakistanis are taking this step toward democracy at a difficult time in their history. There are determined enemies of freedom attacking from within. We understand this struggle; we understand the pressure. And the United States will walk with them on their path to freedom and democracy.

The United States and Pakistan both want to expand opportunity for the Pakistani people. Opportunity starts with economic growth, and that is why President Musharraf has made economic reform a priority for his administration. These reforms have helped Pakistan's economy grow rapidly last year.

There is strong economic vitality in that country, and we will help Pakistan build on that momentum.

We're taking several steps to open up markets and expand trade. And these include efforts to conclude a bilateral investment treaty that would establish clear and transparent rules to provide greater certainty and encourage foreign direct investment. By fostering economic development and opportunity, we will reduce the appeal of radical Islam and demonstrate that America is a steadfast friend and partner of the Pakistani people.

The United States and Pakistan are working together to improve educational opportunities for the Pakistani people. Young men in Pakistan need a real education that provides the skills required in the 21st-century workplace. Pakistan needs to improve literacy for its women and help more Pakistani girls have the opportunity to go to school.

Last year, the United States provided \$66 million to help improve Pakistani education, especially in the least developed regions of the country. This is money well spent. We're glad to partner with the Pakistan Government to help train primary school teachers and administrators and build new schools and adapt existing ones so that young girls can attend school. These funds also support the largest Fulbright program in the world—an educational exchange that brings Pakistani scholars to America and American scholars to Pakistan. By helping Pakistan increase the educational opportunities for its people, we'll help them raise their standard of living and help them marginalize the terrorists and the extremists.

The Pakistani people saw America's commitment to their future when we responded in their hour of need. When a devastating earthquake hit a remote area in the mountains of north Pakistan, it claimed more than 73,000 lives and displaced more than 2.8 million people from their homes. American relief workers were on the ground within 48 hours. Since then, we've pledged more than a half a billion dollars for relief and reconstruction, including \$100 million in private donations from our citizens. These funds have helped to build 228 tent schools, improve shelter for over half a million people,

and feed over a million folks. Our compassion is making a difference in the lives of the Pakistanis, and it's making a difference in how they view America.

The terrorists have said that America is the Great Satan. Today, in the mountains of Pakistan, they call our Chinook helicopters "angels of mercy." Across their country, the Pakistani people see the generous heart of America. Our response has shown them that our commitments to Pakistan are real and lasting. We care about the people in that important country. When they suffer, we want to help.

The great changes that are taking place inside India and Pakistan are also helping to transform the relationship between these two countries. One encouraging sign came after the earthquake, when India offered assistance to Pakistan, and President Musharraf accepted. India sent tents and blankets and food and medicine, and the plane that delivered the first load of supplies was the first Indian cargo aircraft to land in Islamabad since the 1971 war. India and Pakistan must take advantage of this opening to move beyond conflict and come together on other issues where they share common interests.

Good relations with America can help both nations in their quest for peace. Not long ago, there was so much distrust between India and Pakistan that when America had good relations with one, it made the other one nervous. Changing that perception has been one of our administration's top priorities, and we're making good progress. Pakistan now understands that it benefits when America has good relations with India. India understands that it benefits when America has good relations with Pakistan. And we're pleased that India and Pakistan are beginning to work together to resolve their differences directly.

India and Pakistan are increasing the direct links between their countries, including a rail line that has been closed for four decades. Trade between India and Pakistan grew to more than \$800 million from July of 2004 to July of 2005—nearly double the previous year. The Governments of India and Pakistan are now engaged in dialog about the difficult question of Kashmir. For too long, Kashmir has been a source of violence and distrust

between these two countries. But I believe that India and Pakistan now have an historic opportunity to work toward lasting peace. Prime Minister Singh and President Musharraf have shown themselves to be leaders of courage and vision. On my visit, I will encourage them to address this important issue. America supports a resolution in Kashmir that is acceptable to both sides.

This is a sensitive time in South Asia. In Pakistan and other countries, images broadcast around the world have inflamed passions, and these passions have been cynically manipulated to incite violence. America believes that people have the right to express themselves in a free press. America also believes that others have the right to disagree with what's printed in the free press and to respond by organizing protests, so long as they protest peacefully. And when protests turn violent, Governments have an obligation to restore the rule of law, protect lives and property, and ensure that diplomats who are serving their nations overseas are not harmed. We understand that striking the right balance is difficult, but we must not allow mobs to dictate the future of South Asia.

In this vital region, the stakes are high and the opportunities are unprecedented. With the end of the cold war and the fall of the Taliban, more and more people are looking forward to a future of freedom. As freedom spreads, it's bringing hope to hundreds of millions who know nothing but despair. And as freedom spreads, it's sweeping away old grievances and allowing people in Central Asia and South Asia and beyond to take their rightful place in the community of nations.

This vision will take years to achieve, but we can proceed with confidence because we know the power of freedom to transform lives and cultures and overcome tyranny and terror. We can proceed with confidence because we have two partners—two strong partners—in India and Pakistan.

Some people have said the 21st century will be the Asian century. I believe the 21st century will be freedom's century. And together, free Asians and free Americans will seize the opportunities this new century offers and lay the foundation of peace and prosperity for generations to come.

May God bless India and Pakistan. May God continue to bless the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:47 a.m. at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Vishakha N. Desai, president, and Richard C. Holbrooke, executive committee chairman, Asia Society; Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Ambassador to the United States Ronen Sen, and President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam of India; President Pervez Musharraf and Ambassador to the United States Jehangir Karamet of Pakistan; and Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization.

### **Interview With Pakistani Journalists** *February 22, 2006*

**The President.** Thanks for coming. I'm looking forward to going to Pakistan. I appreciate the courage of your President—I'm looking forward to my visit with President Musharraf. I'm trying to think of the number of times I have met with President Musharraf since I've been the President. I would say five or six, seven times. I remember our visit to Camp David.

**Q.** I was there.

**The President.** He is—were you there?  
**Q.** Yes.

**The President.** I appreciate his courage. I appreciate the difficult job he has. I appreciate his commitment to joining the world in dealing with Islamic radicals who will murder innocent people to achieve an objective. I appreciate the fact that he has stood strong in the face of several attempts on his life. I also appreciate our relationship with Pakistan and his vision for a democracy in Pakistan. And so I'm looking forward to the trip. The Prime Minister was here several weeks ago. We had a very good talk. And he was laying the groundwork for what I think will be a constructive visit. Be glad to answer some questions.

### **Reaction to Prophet Mohammed Depictions**

**Q.** Mr. President, I'll start with the cartoon controversy. You and your allies work very hard on bridging the gap between the Islamic and the Western world, but the publication of a few cartoons in a remote newspaper seems to have undone everything. Why?

**The President.** First of all, I think it's very important for people around the world to know that a free press is important for a democratic state; a free press—for peaceful states as well. Free press holds people to account. Free press makes sure that there is a check and a balance on people in power. Free press also must be a responsible press.

Secondly, I fully understand people taking—not liking the cartoons. On the other hand, I do not believe that people should use that as a pretext for violence, nor do I appreciate the fact that some are using—manipulating the anger over the cartoons to achieve political ends. And therefore, it's very important for Governments to not allow policy to be set by those who are cynically manipulating the anger that some have felt over these cartoons.

### **Nuclear Energy in Developing Nations**

**Q.** Mr. President, you have announced this global nuclear energy initiative, and this is the one that you have offered to India also. And you have spoken about the countries—countries like India can also get a benefit of this initiative. Do you have Pakistan in mind—Pakistan already saying that this offer to India is India-specific? Is it India-specific, or Pakistan can also be included in this initiative?

**The President.** Well, we are starting with India, and one of the primary reasons why is that India is in need of a diversification away from fossil fuels. India is consuming a lot of fossil fuel. That is driving up the price of—a part of the reasons why the price is rising. America uses a lot of fossil fuels. China is using more fossil fuels. India is using more fossil fuels, and it's affecting the price of energy in the United States and in India and in Pakistan. And so therefore, to the extent to which we can get these fast-growing, developing nations to use something other than fossil fuels, it's in the world's interest, and it's in Pakistan's interest as well.

Now—and so I would not view—some say, “Well, this is a zero-sum attitude by the United States,” quite the contrary. It's the beginning of a policy that says, there will be a suppliers group of people who are capable of providing fuel stocks for a civilian nuclear

power industry, countries that will then collect the spent fuel, reprocess it to be able to burn it in new types of reactors.

The purpose of this whole initiative and beginning with countries like India, is to recognize that alternative sources of energy are going to be important for the development of a clean world and a world that becomes substantially less reliant on nonrenewable sources of energy.

**Q.** But Pakistan can't be included in that?

**The President.** Well, as I said, this is just the beginning of a very long process.

### **Kashmir**

**Q.** Mr. President, in your speech, you talked about Kashmir dispute, and you said that you would like India and Pakistan to take bilateral steps to resolve the dispute. Pakistan has made certain proposals, but they are not reciprocated by India. And it seems that this bilateral is not going anywhere; there's need for a third-party mediation or some sort of help. Do you have any specific proposals for that?

**The President.** First, I'd like to make sure I clarify my statement for all to read. America supports a solution that is acceptable to all sides—since you're probably the only person in the room that paid attention to my speech—the speech, as you know, I said, “to both sides.” The language should be “all sides,” because it recognizes that a solution must be acceptable to India, Pakistan, and those living within Kashmir.

Our position is one that says a dispute that has been so long in a nation's history can best be resolved when two nations make the determination to sit down and come up with a solution that is acceptable to all sides. Of course, during my discussions, I will encourage that dialog to go forward. I'm convinced that history changes, and as history changes, attitudes can change, circumstances change, and that we have a possibility to see this issue resolved by strong and courageous leaders.

I'm pleased to see the amount of trade that's taking place between India and Pakistan. It's a substantial increase from July of '04 to July of '05. I thought that the—the new transportation routes between India and Pakistan are hopeful signs.

And so the role of the United States, in our judgment, is one that will help lead to a settlement that is acceptable to all sides.

### **Democracy in Pakistan**

**Q.** Mr. President, you also spoke about democracy in Pakistan; some distance has to be covered. And the Commonwealth has recently asked Mr. Musharraf—President Musharraf that he must decide by 2007 whether he wants to continue as the Chief of Army Staff or as the President, one decision. Is the United States comfortable with a leader who is also the Chief of Army Staff in a democracy? Does it bother you that he—his contribution as the Chief of Army Staff?

**The President.** I've had discussions with the President quite frequently about his vision for a democratic Pakistan. And I am—I believe that he is headed for a—continue to head for—on the road of reform. And he understands the pressures being put on him. As you said, the Commonwealth spoke, and I believe that he's committed to having a reform process come to fruition, and I believe he's committed to free and open elections.

### **Iran**

**Q.** Mr. President, there is another issue that is particularly sensitive for both India and Pakistan, which is that, Iran—India-Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline. As we said, India—need alternative sources of energy. So is it possible that—decision, allow the construction of the pipeline?

**The President.** What's important is that India, Pakistan, and the United States work together to send a firm message to the Iranians that a development of a nuclear weapon is unacceptable. You know, we—energy supplies are important for India, and they're important for Pakistan. I fully understand that. But a country which has been unwilling to adhere to treaties that it's agreed to, a country the President of which has said the destruction of Israel is in—part of foreign policy, a country which has not told the truth when it comes to whether or not they're enriching uranium or not, is a country that free nations need to deal with in a diplomatic way. And the best thing that the Iranians can hear is a unified message from all of us.

**Q.** Does it mean that at some date you could decide to take military action against Iran? Would you—

**The President.** Diplomacy is our first option.

### **War on Terror**

**Q.** Mr. President, the recent incident in which U.S. military made a strike in the Pakistani tribal area in the Bajaur area. This has happened before also, and there was some outrage in Pakistan that there was no remorse from the U.S. Government on the action. These actions, when they are taken, is it because—the unilateral action that the folks on the other side do not trust their colleagues on the side of the border, or it's the timing, is it intelligence, or the lack of operational capabilities on the side—on the Pakistani side, that such actions are taken?

**The President.** We are—we're partners in the war against terrorists, some of whom tried to kill your President. We coordinate. We're allies, and we coordinate—nor do we talk about sensitive antiterror operations. Of course, the United States mourns the loss of innocent life.

### **Pakistan-U.S. Trade Relations/ Earthquake in Pakistan**

**Q.** Mr. President, in your speech, you also—you spoke about importance of prosperity, and you talked about offering business—industry in Pakistan. Do you have anything specific in mind such as Pakistan has been trying for some time to get an FTA?

**The President.** First step is a BIT, and we will discuss that—we will continue to discuss that. We discussed that during the Prime Minister's trip, and we will continue to pursue this avenue toward opening up additional opportunities, commercial opportunities between our respective countries.

First things first, however; there have been some preliminary discussions as well, about perhaps some trading arrangements in the Western provinces of Pakistan. These are preliminary discussions. We think it makes sense to have a discussion. Such an agreement, if—a commercial arrangement, investment arrangement would be beneficial not only to Pakistan but to Afghanistan as well. And so there's a variety of discussions we're

having to continue to open up ways to encourage investment and commerce.

I must—I applaud the President's economic reform package. It's yielded some strong results. Pakistan's economy is growing, and that's positive. You know, one of the key things is that people see the benefits of democracy—the tangible benefits of democracy, besides being able to express themselves. Today I also referred to the Pakistan press, you might recall. I think I referred to you as lively, meaning that—at least the Pakistan press I've been exposed to has never been afraid to ask any questions, or never been intimidated, particularly with the open press conference. And I suspect it might be the same when I go next week.

So I want to talk about reconstruction aid right quick before you finish. It's very important for the people of Pakistan to—and this is where trade matters as well, and commerce matters as well, that they see that the United States is interested in the lives of the citizens. You know, sometimes in the way things get reported, our policies get disconnected from people's lives improving. And we want that to happen, because a prosperous Pakistan is—will be a great example, a country that believes in markets and educating people to fill the jobs of the 21st century, and a country that continues to deal with rules and regulations that make investment difficult at times, will show what's possible. And that's important.

When the disaster struck, it took our Government no time to move. And we moved a lot of equipment and a lot of manpower and a lot of aid, because we cared about the people that were suffering. I remember President Musharraf calling me on the phone at one point to thank me. And it was a genuine thanks, because we were—as you know, we transferred a lot of choppers, which were necessary to be able to move manpower and aid into remote regions of your country.

He also asked, would we make sure that beyond the recovery effort, that there was a commitment to help rebuild. And my answer was, yes. And the reason—it's important for your readers to understand, I said, yes, because this country cares about the families whose lives were turned upside down by this disaster. When we heard 73,000 people lost

their life, it touched our hearts and our conscience. When we realized over 2 million people lost their homes, we cared about those who had been displaced.

And so our commitment is to the people of Pakistan, and it's a genuine, real, tangible commitment that the people of the country can see. I understand there's politics, and there's—there's people expressing their opinions. But one thing they can't argue with—those who want to be critical of the United States can't argue with a genuine, heartfelt commitment to the improvement of the lives of those folks in Pakistan who suffered a—suffered mightily as a result of the natural disaster.

Final question, Kamran. Kamran.

**Q.** Yes, Kamran.

**The President.** Kamran.

#### **War on Terror/U.S. Visa Policy**

**Q.** Mr. President, being an ally, there are some expectations. We captured the top lot of the Al Qaida, and 300 Pakistani soldiers died. There is a lot of expectation in Pakistan—you spoke about bilateral investment treaty and stuff, access to the market—more on access to the market. Are we moving towards free trade?

And secondly, Pakistani students, sir, having terrible problems getting visas to the U.S. And that's very important—folks not getting to the U.S. for education, and can you help us?

**The President.** A couple of points—one, there's no question that the Musharraf Government is committed to working to get Al Qaida brought to justice. It was Al Qaida that tried to kill him more than one time. And he also recognizes Al Qaida's presence is destabilizing. Al Qaida doesn't care about the people of Pakistan. They don't care about helping people get a good education, realize the vast potential of Pakistan. They're there to create chaos and murder. And so I appreciate that, and I appreciate his firm resolve.

Secondly, we have been—there is a tangible benefit for the Government and the security of Pakistan in dealing with—using—sharing with, providing equipment. We resolved a long-simmering issue in the F-16s. I recognize it has been put on hold, but the Government's commitment is a real commit-

ment. It changed policy, as you recall. It reversed something that took place in the past.

The BIT is a beginning of—it's a step toward what you talked about, advancing—additional trading.

I agree with you on the issue of education. First of all, there are a lot of Pakistan citizens here, and a lot of Pakistani Americans that are making vital contributions to our country, proud United States citizens who honor their heritage.

I agree with you that there ought to be more student exchanges. But this is not an issue just for Pakistani students; this is an issue for students from other parts of the world as well. We had a very restrictive visa policy right after 9/11. It was a—our visa policy was a natural reaction to a terrible event that took place. But by—it didn't take me long to realize that we were missing a great opportunity to have students from Pakistan see the real America. And there's no better place, no better way in many ways to see America than to come as a student, study at our institutions, but more importantly, interface with people the same age and realize that ours is an accepting culture.

**Q.** Absolutely.

**The President.** And we welcome Muslims. And we welcome people that may be different, and that there's no better ambassador for the American way of life and the attitudes—the true attitudes of the American citizens than to have somebody here who has seen firsthand what America is like and then go back home. Word of mouth is a pretty significant antidote to some of the propaganda that is being played out for others to hear. And so I agree with you, and we're—Condi Rice is very much involved with constantly revisiting the visa issue—student visa issue, in particular, and not only encouraging students to come here, but once they're here, not making it difficult for them to complete their education. In other words, there are some restrictions even after the students got here.

Finally, we are also—along these lines announced a very strong language initiative so that more people are capable of—will be capable of conversing with people in parts of the world where, frankly, we haven't had that much conversation in their native language—



all aimed at creating a hospitable world. And this trip will help send a message to the people of Pakistan: One, we're proud of the Pakistani Americans who live here; two, we want this relation to continue on. It's a vital relationship. And as I say, I am pleased with my personal relationship with President Musharraf. I try to put myself in his shoes. He is—he's got a tough assignment. On the one hand, he's got people trying to kill him, and on the other hand, he's taking this country toward—further down the road of democracy, and in so doing, is dealing with—as we speak, dealing with people who are taking advantage of a free press.

And as I mentioned to you, I understand why people are reacting to that. It's very important, however, that they react in a way that does honor to the process and not resort to violence and destruction and, in some countries, to death.

And so looking forward to it. See you all there, I hope.

#### **President's Upcoming Visit to Pakistan**

**Q.** Mr. President, one last——

**The President.** Yes.

**Q.** About the visit, can you state if you ever think of canceling the visit——

**The President.** No, I'm not going to—never thought about canceling it.

**Q.** No?

**The President.** Of course not.

**Q.** Because——

**The President.** No, zero, zero chance.

#### **U.S. Visa Policy**

**Q.** So we are a good word for the students, they may get visas?

**The President.** Well, I think we're working it very hard to make sure. Obviously, Ambassador Crocker and the Embassy there is the conscience. I will pass this on to Condi when I talk to her just to make sure that she's—she's constantly calibrating and looking at the issue. We hear—believe, we've had a lot of—there are a lot of folks here that—in America, and a lot of embassies around the world, hear from respective Governments when there's backlogs and slowness. These voices that are concerned about whether or not there's access to our univer-

sities are heard loud and clear. Believe me, it's——

**Q.** Mr. President, best antidote is exposing people to American people.

**The President.** There you go.

**Q.** That's the best antidote you have.

**The President.** Well, thank you.

**Q.** Don't restrict that.

**The President.** Don't worry. Glad you're here. Good job.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 2:11 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz of Pakistan; and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

#### **Remarks at a Celebration of African American History Month**

*February 22, 2006*

**The President.** Welcome. Please be seated. Thanks for coming. Welcome to the White House. So glad you could join us for the 80th—80th—celebration of America—African American History Month. We're here today to mark the achievements of African Americans in our country's history and to honor the contributions so many African Americans are making to our land today.

I appreciate the Vice President joining us. I want to thank the Secretary of Health and Human Services—[laughter]—he's constantly trying to promote himself—the Secretary of HUD, Alphonso Jackson. Looking sharp today. [Laughter] Keeping good company, too, by the way. I want to thank the other members of my administration who have joined us.

I particularly want to pay my respects to Dr. Dorothy Height, president emeritus and founder—[applause]. I couldn't help but noticing A.C. Green. [Laughter] Thanks, A.C., for setting such a good example and using your position to help others. It's an honor you're here; really appreciate you coming.

This month we gather to honor the generations of heroes who called on our Nation to live up to its founding promise of equality—people like Dorothy Height. The past year, we lost two of these heroes, women whose

grace and determination helped change the path of American history, Rosa Parks and Coretta Scott King.

Mrs. Parks helped set in motion a national movement for equality and freedom when she refused a bus driver's order to give her seat to a white man. Mrs. King spent her life advancing the cause of civil rights for all Americans. The courage and the dignity of these women helped rouse the conscience of a complacent nation, and we will continue to work to make the America these women fought for uphold the promise to all.

The reason to honor these women is to pay homage to their character and their strength, and to remember the ideal of active citizenship. In the 1960s, many active citizens struggled hard to convince Congress to pass civil rights legislation that ensured the rights of all—including the right to vote. That victory was a milestone in the history of civil rights. Congress must act to renew the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

When African American History Month began eight decades ago, it was based on the belief that if African Americans were to take their rightful place in American society, Americans of all races should learn about black contributions to our history. That conviction is every bit as true today as it was in 1926. Generations of African Americans have added to the unique character of our society. Our Nation is stronger and more hopeful as a result of those contributions.

America is a better place because of African American writers like Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, and W.E.B. DuBois. Our culture is richer, thanks to the talents of musicians like Nat King Cole, Lena Horne, and Dizzy Gillespie. We've been inspired by the achievements of African American scientists like George Washington Carver and baseball stars like Jackie Robinson. Our Nation is stronger because of the distinguished leadership of those like Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall and our two most recent Secretaries of State, Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice. Thanks to the contributions of these leaders and many others, our Nation has made great progress toward racial equality, yet we've got to remember there is still more work to be done.

As we honor the achievements of black Americans across our land, we will keep striving to build an America where the dignity of every person is respected, where people are judged by the content of their character, and where the hope of the American Dream reaches every neighborhood and every citizen.

To ensure the promise of America reaches all our citizens, we have got to make sure that every child receives a quality education. The reason I worked so hard for the No Child Left Behind Act is because I believe that every child can learn, and I refuse to accept a school system that doesn't teach every child. And so we've raised the standards, and we measure. You cannot solve a problem unless you measure, and when we detect problems, we solve them early, before it's too late.

The No Child Left Behind Act is challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations, and it's having a positive result. Because we measure, because we hold people to account, we know this: that the most recent results of our Nation's Report Card show African American children are closing an achievement gap. And it's an achievement gap we must close if the promise of this country is going to reach every neighborhood.

Last year, African American 9-year-olds set records in reading and math. The gap between white and African American 9-year-olds in reading is the narrowest it's been in the history of the accountability system. Thirteen-year-old African American students achieved their highest math scores ever. We're making progress, and we're not going to stop until every single child has a quality education.

One way to ensure the promise of America reaches all of our citizens is to encourage ownership. We want people owning something. One way to help people realize their dreams is to encourage African Americans to own their own businesses. Last year, the Small Business Administration increased the number of loans to African American businesses by 42 percent. We're going to continue encouraging entrepreneurship throughout our country. Minority businesses are getting a better chance to compete for Federal contracts. More African Americans

than ever before own their own businesses, and that's a hopeful statistic and an important signal that the American Dream is reaching beyond certain segments of our society.

Part of ownership is for people to own their own homes. I love the idea when somebody opens up the door of their house and says, "Welcome to my home; welcome to my piece of property." In 2002, Alphonso and I set a goal of having 5.5 [million]<sup>\*</sup> new minority homeowners by the end of the decade. Since we set that goal, the number of minority homeowners has increased by 2.6 million. We're on track to reach our goal. Minority homeownership in the United States of America is at an alltime high.

As we celebrate African American History Month, we remember and thank the many African Americans who are defending our ideals as members of the United States Armed Forces, some of whom are with us here today. I thank these courageous men and women who are risking lives to protect us, to preserve our liberty. By bringing the promise of freedom to millions across the world, they are laying the foundation of peace for generations to come. God bless.

Service is a value that we all share, and today I am proud to recognize five citizens who are setting an example for all our fellow citizens. The President's Volunteer Service Award is the highest level of commendation a President can give in recognition of those who have contributed their time and their talent and their energy to helping others.

Today we honor five such souls who are working to improve their communities and help their fellow citizens. Each of them has heard a call to serve something greater than themselves. By answering that call, you are inspiring others to do the same.

The volunteers we recognize today are Carl Anderson from Washington; Karl'Nequa and Katie Ball from Jackson, Mississippi; Steve Ellis from the great State of Texas—[laughter]—and Joan Thomas from Smyrna, Georgia. Their efforts are helping to provide role models and mentors to inner-city girls, to encouraging youth volunteers to work with people with disabilities, to provide computer skills training in local schools and community

centers, and providing college scholarships to underprivileged children.

Today we honor your service. We appreciate what you have done to lift the spirit of the country. We thank you for loving a neighbor just like you would like to be loved yourself. And I join all Americans in congratulating you and wishing you continued success.

And now, Commanders, if you all would read the citations.

[At this point, Lt. Col. Christian Cabaniss, USMC, Marine Corps Military Aide to the President, read the citations, and the President presented the medals.]

That's it. Thanks for coming. God bless. Appreciate you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:13 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Dorothy I. Height, chair and president emerita, National Council of Negro Women, Inc.; and A.C. Green, Jr., former National Basketball Association forward.

## Statement on the Bombing of the Golden Mosque in Samarra, Iraq

February 22, 2006

On behalf of the American people, I extend my deepest condolences to the people of Iraq for the brutal bombing of the Golden Mosque in Samarra, one of the holiest sites in Shi'a Islam. The terrorists in Iraq have again proven that they are enemies of all faiths and of all humanity. The world must stand united against them and steadfast behind the people of Iraq. This senseless crime is an affront to people of faith throughout the world. The United States condemns this cowardly act in the strongest possible terms.

I ask all Iraqis to exercise restraint in the wake of this tragedy and to pursue justice in accordance with the laws and Constitution of Iraq. Violence will only contribute to what the terrorists sought to achieve by this act.

The United States stands ready to do all in its power to assist the Government of Iraq to identify and bring to justice those responsible for this terrible act. And the American people pledge to work with the people of

<sup>\*</sup> White House correction.

Iraq to rebuild and restore the Golden Mosque of Samarra to its former glory.

**Proclamation 7981—To Modify Duty Free Treatment Under the Generalized System of Preferences**  
February 22, 2006

*By the President of the United States of America*

**A Proclamation**

1. Section 502 of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (the “1974 Act”) (19 U.S.C. 2462), authorizes the President to designate countries as beneficiary developing countries, and to designate any beneficiary developing country as a least-developed beneficiary developing country, for purposes of the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program.

2. Pursuant to section 502 of the 1974 Act, and taking into account the factors set forth in section 502(c) (19 U.S.C. 2462(c)), I have determined that the suspension pursuant to Proclamation 6123 of April 26, 1990, of preferential treatment for Liberia as a beneficiary developing country under the GSP should be ended.

3. Pursuant to section 502 of the 1974 Act, and having considered the factors set forth in sections 501 (19 U.S.C. 2461) and 502(c), I have also determined that Liberia should be designated as a least-developed beneficiary developing country for purposes of the GSP.

4. Section 604 of the 1974 Act (19 U.S.C. 2483), as amended, authorizes the President to embody in the Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS) of the United States the substance of relevant provisions of that Act, or other acts affecting import treatment, and of actions taken thereunder.

**Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush,** President of the United States of America, acting under the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including title V and section 604 of the 1974 Act (19 U.S.C. 2461–67, 2483), do proclaim that:

(1) In order to reflect in the HTS the restoration of preferential treatment for Liberia

as a beneficiary developing country under the GSP, general note 4(a) is modified by adding in alphabetical order “Liberia” to the list entitled “Independent Countries.”

(2) In order to reflect in the HTS the designation of Liberia as a least-developed beneficiary developing country under the GSP, general note 4(b)(i) is modified by adding in alphabetical order “Liberia.”

(3) The modifications to the HTS made by paragraph 1 of this proclamation shall be effective with respect to articles entered, or withdrawn from warehouse for consumption, on or after 15 days after the date of this proclamation.

(4) The modifications to the HTS made by paragraph 2 of this proclamation shall be effective with respect to articles entered, or withdrawn from warehouse for consumption, on or after 60 days after the date of this proclamation.

(5) Any provisions of previous proclamations and Executive Orders that are inconsistent with the actions taken in this proclamation are superseded to the extent of such inconsistency.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-second day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirtieth.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., February 23, 2006]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on February 24.

**Letter to Congressional Leaders on Extending Generalized System of Preferences Benefits to Liberia**  
February 22, 2006

*Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)*

I am writing to inform you of my intent to add Liberia to the list of beneficiary developing countries and to the list of least-developed beneficiary developing countries under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP). I have carefully considered the criteria identified in sections 501 and 502 of

the Trade Act of 1974, as amended. In light of these criteria, I have determined that it is appropriate to end the suspension of Liberia as a GSP beneficiary developing country and to extend least-developed beneficiary developing country benefits to Liberia.

This notice is submitted in accordance with section 502(f) of the Trade Act of 1974.

Sincerely,

**George W. Bush**

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate.

**Letter to Congressional Leaders  
Transmitting a Report Relating to  
the Interdiction of Aircraft Engaged  
in Illicit Drug Trafficking**

*February 22, 2006*

*Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)*

Consistent with the authorities relating to official immunity in the interdiction of aircraft engaged in illicit drug trafficking (Public Law 107-108, 22 U.S.C. 2291-4), and in order to keep the Congress fully informed, I am providing a report prepared by my Administration. This report addresses the matter of assistance for interdiction of aircraft engaged in illicit drug trafficking.

Sincerely,

**George W. Bush**

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate.

**Interview With Indian Journalists**

*February 22, 2006*

**The President.** Quick statement. I'll be glad to answer questions. I am really looking forward to my trip. It's the first trip to India for me and my wife. We had a great dinner here with the Prime Minister. I found him to be a very decent, honorable person with whom we established warm relations. And he—I just can't tell you how—what a kind person he was and, at the same time, represented his great country's interests very well.

I do want to make something clear in the speech I gave today. I said that—as to the Kashmir interest—issue, America supports a solution that is acceptable to all sides. As you might recall in my remarks, I said, “to both sides.” I would like the record to be so that the world hears me say, “all sides.” I fully understand that the deal has to be acceptable to the Indians, Paks, as well as the citizens of Kashmir.

Okay?

**India-U.S. Relations**

**Q.** Yes. Mr. President, how and why has India come front and center to U.S. strategic thinking now after being on the margins for so many years?

**The President.** Well, as you know, there was a history, particularly during the cold war, that made it difficult for our countries to establish a close relationship. However, things change in the world. And as the post-cold war thaw developed, as—attitudes began to shift.

Secondly, the Indian economy, as a result of more transparency and openness and trade, began to change. And as the Indian economy changed, it changed the commercial relationship between the United States and India.

Thirdly, there are some common threats that make it in our interests to work together—namely terrorism. As I said in my speech today, the United States has been attacked, but India certainly understands what it means to have suffering as a result of terrorist activities. And so there's common interests that have helped to change the relationship. And I intend to seize those interests, as does the Prime Minister, in order to foster what we've called a strategic relationship.

And in my speech today, I made it clear to the American people that this relationship is in our interests, and I described the various ways it was in our interests. I think the evolution of the relationship goes to show that the world is—changes, and it's never static. And so thank you for the question.

### **United Nations Security Council Membership**

**Q.** Mr. President, if India's credentials are so good, why isn't the U.S. backing its candidacy for the U.N. Security Council?

**The President.** Well, let me make one other point, if you don't mind, that I should have made in my speech today, and that is that there are a lot of Indian Americans who made a tremendous contribution to our country as well. And there are a lot of—over the last—as the high-tech boom helped transform our society, a lot of the brain power behind that boom have been Indian Americans, as well as Indians educated here in America. And so the American people, as well, have begun to get kind of a different perspective on the great contributions that India can not only make to our own country but can make to the world.

Our position on the United Nations Security Council has been very clear. First, we support a U.N. Security Council reform, but we think it ought to happen after other institutions within the United Nations become reformed. What I was always worried about is that we would focus on the U.N. Security Council and nothing else would happen. And so we have—we have said to all parties concerned—I fully understand the Indian position just like other nations—that “we will take your case under consideration, but first things first.”

And a classic case of the reform I'm talking about is the Human Rights Commission. It needed to be reformed. And what I was, again, worried about is that we'd miss opportunity while focusing on the U.N. Security Council.

### **Civilian Nuclear Power Program in India**

**Q.** Mr. President, when do you intend to take the U.S.-India nuclear deal before the Congress and before the Nuclear Supplies Group, which is part of the U.S. obligation?

**The President.** Yes, it is. As we speak, Nick Burns of the State Department is discussing this vital issue with Indian counterparts. We are working through what has been—as I said in the speech, a difficult issue for the Indian Government as well for the American Government. To change the past, the ways of the past can be difficult at times.

I appreciate the Prime Minister's courage last July of laying out a way forward, which I support. And so first things first is to go to India and hopefully reach an agreement on separation and then bring that agreement back and start selling it to the Congress. It's—but we can't bring anything back until we've agreed to the agreement. And that's what's happening now. There's a spirit of goodwill and cooperation.

It's in our country's interest, by the way, to encourage India—and aid India in its development of a civilian nuclear power program. The American people are beginning to see high prices of energy, but so are the Indian people. And the reason why is, is that there's growing economies—ours, India's, China's—which is adding to global demand for energy. And demand is outstripping supply, and then what happens, you see price.

And one way to help deal with price here at home and/or with India is to develop alternative ways to power homes and businesses as well as automobiles. I was sincere in my speech today when I said that we're dedicated to research and development to come up with alternative ways to use automobiles and want to share that technologies with other nations, particularly a nation like India, which has got huge potential and vast room for growth.

And it's in our mutual interests—I also made it clear that it's in our interests that the Indian economy prosper. And it's a very simple reason why. One, a prosperous country is one that is—particularly one that has shown its capacity to deal with a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society—it will give India more opportunity to lead, particularly in parts of the world where people need to see how democracy can work and function in a proper way.

And secondly, the American people have got to understand a prosperous India is advantageous to our own industries. I mean, we want people buying American products. Indians want Americans buying Indian products, and that exchange of trade in a free and fair way is beneficial for workers and consumers.

And I said an amazing statistic today—at least I thought it was—300 million middle-class citizens in India. That's larger than the

population of the United States. And so we shouldn't fear relations with India—matter of fact, we ought to welcome them and work on ways to strengthen them. That's really what the purpose of the trip is.

**Q.** Do you consider India to be a responsible nuclear nation?

**The President.** I do, particularly when they signed the IAEA safeguards, and they have a separation between their military and their civilian nuclear parts of their Government.

### **Iran**

**Q.** Mr. President, would the United States have a problem if India continued to source oil and gas from Iran?

**The President.** I think people are going to have to buy their energy where they can get it. On the other hand, I do want to make it clear to the Indian people and the Indian Government that an Iran with a nuclear weapon will destabilize the world and that those of us who are for peace and stability must work in concert. So there's a difference between energy supply and working closely to achieve a very important objective.

And we will discuss this issue carefully with the Prime Minister. There is a consensus in the world, and that consensus is that an Iranian Government that has declared its—has said that Israel shouldn't exist, for example, and if it were to have a nuclear weapon, would be a danger to all of us. And I will continue to make that point with the Prime Minister.

### **A.Q. Khan**

**Q.** Why has the U.S. not questioned A.Q. Khan, whose activities intersect proliferation and terrorism?

**The President.** Well, we were the nation that exposed the conspiracy to deal with—more than the conspiracy, the activities; let me rephrase that—we were the nation that exposed the activities of sharing technologies, sensitive technologies, nuclear weapons-related technologies. And we, of course, want to know as much about the A.Q. Khan network as possible. But had it not been for U.S. intelligence, coupled with British intelligence, this network never would have been

exposed. And the light of day helps understand proliferation.

### **Civilian Nuclear Power Program in India**

**Q.** Mr. President, why does India have to jump through the hoops to get a civilian nuclear agreement when its energy requirements are similar to China, another big, growing economy?

**The President.** There are the nuclear supplier group and the IAEA—in other words, the world has signed on to this. We think it's in India's interest to do so, as it pertains to its civilian nuclear power industry. It will give confidence to people. It will make it easier for the United States to work with India. This will be a confidence-building measure that we don't believe is an unrealistic request. And we do realize there will be separation between the military side and the civilian side. What we're working on is the civilian side.

### **Spread of Democracy**

**Q.** Is the U.S. more comfortable dealing with dictators and monarchs?

**The President.** Do what now? Do I feel comfortable doing what?

**Q.** Dealing with dictators and monarchs?

**The President.** Do I feel comfortable dealing with them?

**Q.** No, the U.S.

**The President.** The U.S. feel comfortable with dealing with dictators?

**Q.** And monarchs.

**The President.** And monarchs? Well, I mean, I've got a great relationship with Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth of Great Britain. [Laughter] She's a lovely lady and a great figure in a country that's an important ally. And of course, that monarchy is very supportive of a free and open and democratic system.

You must take the words that I said in my second Inaugural Address very seriously, in that we must end tyranny in the 21st century. It's a goal that all of us can work on. India has got a unique role to play. I mean, when you really think about troubled spots, these are countries many times that are having difficulty dealing with what it means to honor minority rights and welcoming different religions within, kind of, a social and civil fabric.

And India has done a magnificent job of showing the world how democracy can work. And it's—India is—I'm confident the country will play a constructive role and can do so in a much better way—many times—than the United States can. I mean, after all, there are 150 [million] \* Muslims living within the Indian democracy. We got a lot of Muslims in the United States, as well, which shows the world that it's—you're capable of honoring—worshiping God as you see fit, and you can do so in a free way and, at the same time, be a productive citizen of a state.\*

And India can help a lot. I was very impressed by its contribution to a new democracy in the neighborhood, and that's Afghanistan. India has provided \$565 million of cash, recently pledged an additional \$50 million to build the Afghan National Assembly building. And that's responsible—a responsible nation does that. And it's a—it goes to show—at least says to me that India understands that a democracy in our neighborhood will help yield peace, because if you study the history of the world, regions that had been in turmoil are now peaceful as a result of the evolution of democracy.

And one of the points I made in my address to the Asia Society is that there are—there's more democracies now in the region, which will make it easier for a current Prime Minister, future Prime Minister of India to help achieve the vision that we all want, which is a peaceful world.

### **India-U.S. Relations**

**Q.** Mr. President, in this era of free-flow capital, why would—why are there so many restrictions about inflow of talent—human capital to the United States, who probably add wealth and knowledge—

**The President.** I appreciate that question. I am—you're talking about visa restrictions for highly educated citizens. I am for lifting those. I think we ought to raise the level of those who are either educated here and stay here and/or come meeting high—with high skill levels. It's in our interest. I've always been a proponent of that.

And likewise, I would hope that India would lift its investment caps. In other

words—and part of the trip is to kind of work on ways to continue to develop this strategic relationship in a constructive way. It's a—you know, I said something interesting—at least I thought it was interesting—in the speech. I said, for a period of time, if you're a friend of Pakistan, you couldn't deal with India, and if you're a friend of India, you couldn't deal with Pakistan. And we have tried to change the relationships so that people recognize it's in their interest that the United States is a friend of Pakistan's, and people in Pakistan recognize it's in their interest that the United States is a friend of India's, to help, if need be, reduce tensions.

Right now the level of tensions are, relatively speaking, down. I can remember when I first came into office. You might remember there was a series of incidents that got everybody quite nervous, and we had shuttle diplomacy—Colin Powell. And it seems to me that there is a renewed commitment to resolving problems. I thought it was very interesting that trade between the two countries has doubled, that there's, you know, new transportation hubs. That's all very positive in terms of resolving issues.

You asked me about the relationship, how it's evolved, and I mentioned to you that as time passes sometimes and circumstances change, relationships are able to develop a new dynamic. I would hope that time and circumstantial change is enabling India and Pakistan to develop a new dynamic. It appears to be that way.

Final question.

### **President's Upcoming Visit to India**

**Q.** Between a cricket match and a Bollywood movie, what would a—

**The President.** Cricket match and a—

**Q.** You like watching?

**The President.** What was the second?

**Q.** It's between a Bollywood movie and a cricket match.

**The President.** I'm a cricket match person. [Laughter] I appreciate it. As I understand it, I may have a little chance to learn something about cricket. It's a great pastime. [Laughter]

**Q.** But Mr. President, you're going to India, but you're not visiting the Taj Mahal.

\* White House correction.



**The President.** I know. It means I'm going to have to——

**Q.** Have you broken a promise to the First Lady?

**The President.** No, it means I'm going to have to come back. It's a—I am disappointed with that. People who have seen the Taj Mahal say that it's—pictures don't do it justice. It's one of the great magnificent sites of the world. And look, if I were the scheduler, perhaps I'd be doing things differently. But you want me doing one thing. I'll be the President; we've got the scheduler being the scheduler. I'm going to miss a lot of the really interesting parts of your great country; I know that. I would hope that I would be invited back sometime after this trip.

**Q.** You could be in trouble with the “Desperate Housewife.”

**The President.** Yes. Well, she's certainly the star of the family. She's really looking forward to going with me.

### India

**Q.** Mr. President, what is your earliest memory of India?

**Press Secretary Scott McClellan.** We've got to go to the next one.

**Q.** What is your earliest memory of India and Indians?

**The President.** My best memory?

**Q.** Earliest.

**The President.** At least memory?

**Press Secretary McClellan.** Earliest.

**The President.** Earliest. [Laughter]

**Q.** Earliest.

**The President.** Gandhi. It's my first memory, as I think about India—you know, a person who was so spiritual that he captured the imagination of the entire world. He's proof positive that—throughout history there have been individuals that have had the capacity to shape thought and to influence and—beyond border. And he did that.

**Q.** You watched the movie?

**The President.** I watched that too. But that's—but my memory was earlier than that. Thank you.

**Q.** Thank you very much.

**The President.** Enjoyed it.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 1:49 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his

remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India; A.Q. Khan, former head of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program; and former Secretary of State Colin L. Powell. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 23. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

### Remarks Following a Cabinet Meeting and an Exchange With Reporters

February 23, 2006

**The President.** Thank you all for coming. My Cabinet just met to get a report from Fran Townsend about the lessons-learned from Hurricane Katrina. On September the 6th, I asked Fran to conduct a thorough review of the Federal response to Katrina and to make recommendations about how we can better respond in the future. I wasn't satisfied with the Federal response. Fran and her team produced a lessons-learned document, and she just briefed the Cabinet about lessons learned.

I reminded our Cabinet that hurricane season begins in June and that we will be tracking the implementations of the recommendations in this report. I want to thank her for her report. It's a good work. We will learn from the lessons of the past to better protect the American people.

We have made a strong commitment to people in the gulf coast, and we will honor that commitment as well. The report helps us anticipate how to better respond to future disasters. In the meantime, our commitment to rebuild and help rebuild Mississippi and Louisiana is ongoing and robust.

I'll be glad to answer some questions. Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press]. Two questions. You're the first questioner.

### Bombing of the Golden Mosque in Samarra

**Q.** Mr. President, dozens of Sunni mosques have been attacked and scores of people have been killed after the bombing of the Golden Mosque. How serious is the danger of a civil war in Iraq?

**The President.** First of all, the people of the United States strongly condemn the destruction of the Golden Mosque. We believe

in freedom to worship. And I understand the consternation and concern of Iraqi Shi'as when they see this most holy site wantonly destroyed.

I appreciate very much the leaders from all aspects of Iraqi society that have stood up and urged for there to be calm. They recognize two things—one, the Iraqi people want to live in a democracy. After all, 11 million people voted in the last election. In other words, given a choice of whether or not they want democracy or a different form of government, millions of people showed up to vote, making a clear statement to the Iraqi authorities as well as to the people of the world—they want democracy.

Secondly, the voices of reason from all aspects of Iraqi life—understand that this bombing is intended to create civil strife, that the act was a evil act. The destruction of a holy site is a political act intending to create strife. And so I'm pleased with the voices of reason that have spoken out. And we will continue to work with those voices of reason to enable Iraq to continue on the path of a democracy that unites people and doesn't divide them.

Finally, I do want to assure the Iraqi people that the U.S. Government is serious in our commitment in helping to rebuild that holy site. We understand its importance to Iraqi society, and we want to stand side by side with the Government in making sure that beautiful dome is restored.

Caren [Caren Bohan, Reuters].

### **Dubai Ports World/Homeland Security**

**Q.** Sir, do you wish you had known earlier about the Dubai Ports deal, and were you surprised by the controversy over it?

**The President.** The more people learn about the transaction that has been scrutinized and approved by my Government, the more they'll be comforted that our ports will be secure. Port security in the United States will be run by Customs—U.S. Customs—and the United States Coast Guard. The management of some ports, which heretofore has been managed by a foreign company will be managed by another company from a foreign land. And so people don't need to worry about security. This deal wouldn't go forward

if we were concerned about the security for the United States of America.

What I find interesting is that it's okay for a British company to manage some ports but not okay for a company from a country that is also a valuable ally in the war on terror. The UAE has been a valuable partner in fighting the war on terror. A lot of goods are shipped from ports to the United States—managed by this company.

And again, I repeat to the American people, this wouldn't be going forward if we weren't certain that our ports would be secure. But I also want to remind folks that it's really important we not send mixed messages to friends and allies around the world as we combine—put together a coalition to fight this war on terror.

And so we'll continue to talk to people in Congress and explain clearly why the decision was made. Many of those doing the explanations are around this table, and I want to thank them for bringing a sense of calm to this issue, as people understand the logic of the decision.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:16 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

### **Remarks at a Reception for Congressional Candidate Chris Chocola in Mishawaka, Indiana February 23, 2006**

Thank you all very much. Please be seated. Thanks for the warm welcome. I have grown to admire Chris Chocola a lot because he is a person who does in office what he said he would do during campaigns. He is a honest, decent, down-to-earth, practical man who deserves to be reelected to the United States Congress.

Chris is a rising star in the House of Representatives. And when you find a rising star, it makes a lot of sense to keep him serving you. So I want to thank you all for recognizing talent when you see it. Thank you for backing this good man for his reelection. Thank you for coming today to give me a chance to say loud and clear, Chris is the

right person for the 2d Congressional District of Indiana.

And like me, he married well—[*laughter*]*—it's great to see Sarah—and Caroline and Colin. You know, being in politics is hard on your family. But it sure does help when you, in my case, marry a good wife, and in Chris's case, marry a good wife too. And there's nothing better, by the way, in the political arena than going back home after a day when maybe some sharp elbows were flying, to a family that loves you more than anything. I think it's important to have somebody in the United States Congress who places his faith and his family as a priority in his life. And that's certainly what your Congressman Chris Chocola does. And I can't thank you enough for backing him.*

I want to thank Bethel College for letting us come by; I want to thank your president, Steve Cramer. And I want to thank the students. I know there's some students listening to this speech—one, I'll try to keep it short so you can get back to class. [*Laughter*] And two, please take politics seriously. In our society, all of us have a duty to participate. And one way you participate is when elections come around, you go to the polls and do your civic duty by voting. Now, I hear too often, "My vote doesn't count." Your vote counts. And by the way, when you go into the booth, vote for him.

I want to thank all the organizers of this event. It's not easy to organize an event that has been this successful of this size. And so, for all of you who have worked so hard, thanks for taking time to support Chris. I want to thank Jack Hiler, former Member of the United States Congress, who is the chairman of Chris's campaign. I want to thank Murray Clark, the chairman of our Republican Party of the State of Indiana. The attorney general, Steve Carter, is with us. General Carter, thank you for coming. Appreciate you taking time out. Most of all, thank you for being here.

Before I get to my speech, I do want to thank the mayor, Jeff Rea. Jeff, thanks for coming. He gave me the key to the city. [*Laughter*] My only advice, Mr. Mayor, is pave the roads. [*Laughter*] And I know you will. [*Laughter*] I asked him, I said, "Do you like being mayor?" He said, "I love serving

the people." And I don't see how you can be in public office if you don't love serving the people.

Chris loves serving the people of this district. Every time I'm with him, he's talking about the people of the 2d Congressional District. He says, "I'm concerned about things; I'm worried about the small-business owner," or, "I want you to understand, Mr. President, how important Humvee is." I said, "I understand the importance of Humvee; you don't have to tell me that." [*Laughter*] He's talking about—all the time, talking about people who live here. And the reason why is because he cares about people. It's one thing to be espoused in policy; it's another thing to have, deep in your heart, the desire to help people help themselves.

One of the things about why I like working with Chris and people in Congress is that we're there for a reason. Some people in Washington just want to say, "Well, I held the office." But that's not why Chris ran. He didn't need to run. He is a successful small-business owner. Pleased to report he and I are not lawyers. For all your lawyers out there, that's all right. We need them. But we got plenty of them in Washington, DC. [*Laughter*] Seems like it makes sense to have somebody that knows how to run a business representing this important congressional district.

We're living during historic times. I wish I could report to you that the war on terror was over, but it's not. It's—these are serious times that require serious thought and serious purpose in order to do our most important duty, which is to protect the American people.

You know, my buddies in Texas, they come up to the White House quite frequently. And after they get over their initial shock that I'm there—[*laughter*]*—they then ask me, "What's it like to be President of the United States?" And the best way to give a job description is it's—I make a lot of decisions. I'm a decisionmaker. And some of the decisions that—you'll see them; they're visible; they're big decisions. And some of them you'll never see. And I want to share with you the rationale as to why I made some of the decisions I've made, decisions that Chris*

has been strong to support for the good of the country.

My thinking about the world changed on September the 11th, 2001. You just got to know that, so that when you see me talking about why we're doing things we're doing for the country, just keep in mind that on that day I vowed that I would use everything in my power to protect the American people; that I recognized the nature of the war we were in, and I recognized the nature of the enemy.

Let me talk about the enemy right quick. These are people who have no conscience, but they do have a philosophy. These aren't isolated cases of people that are acting out their anger. These are folks who have espoused an ideology that is the exact opposite of the United States of America. Perhaps the best way to describe their thinking is to remind you what life was like under the Taliban for people in Afghanistan. Life under the—in Afghanistan said that if you were a young girl you had no chance, no hope. As a matter of fact, you would never get educated. Life under the Taliban in Afghanistan said if you don't ascribe to the way we think about religion, you're subject to penalty—harsh penalty often, sometimes execution. In other words, there's no sense of freedom, no sense of individualism. It's all this kind of darkness prescribed by a few. It's totalitarianism at its worst.

They've made it clear their intentions. When the enemy speaks, you better have people in Congress and in the White House who takes their word seriously. See, some in Washington would like to look at the world the way they want it to be; our job is to look at the world the way it is and try to work to make it better.

And so the enemy has said, "Don't worry, America is soft and weak, and all we've got to do is use the one weapon we have, which is the capacity and willingness to kill innocent life, and they will lose their nerve." And the reason they want us to retreat from the world is because they want to find safe haven again from which they can plot and plan and attack and kill.

I told you September the 11th changed my frame of reference, changed my thinking. I am never going to give any quarter whatso-

ever to the enemy. We will stay on the hunt. We will be on the offense, and we will protect the American people by defeating them overseas so we do not have to face them here at home.

That's why it's important to have Members of Congress who understand that when we put any person in harm's way, he or she deserves the best training, the best equipment, the best support possible. Chris Chocoma has been a strong backer of the men and women who wear the uniform of the United States of America.

I also recognize that if the enemy were able to find safe haven, that would make this country less secure. And so I put out a doctrine early on in this war, the first war of the 21st century—by the way, I wish I wasn't talking about war. No President ever says, "Gosh, I hope there's war." For those of you who are young here, I want you to know what I'm leading to is how to keep the peace and do my job that you expect me to do, which is to prevent the enemy from attacking again.

See, when I grew up, oceans would protect us. At least that's what we thought. You might remember the '50s and '60s. We'd see a threat overseas, and we were teenage kids and just didn't need to worry about it, did we, because oceans were there to protect us. That all changed on September the 11th. And so I've talked—two things to the American people—one, we've got to deny the terrorists safe haven; and secondly, we've got to deal with threats before they fully materialize.

In the old days, a threat could be there, and we could pick and choose, decide whether or not we needed to deal with it or not. That's no longer the case in the 21st century. And so I said to the people of Afghanistan, "You give up bin Laden; give up Al Qaida," because they were providing safe haven. I said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're equally as guilty as the terrorists." And when the President speaks, he better mean what he says. And I meant what I said, and they didn't give up Al Qaida, and we routed the Taliban, and 25 million people now live in freedom.

We saw a threat with Saddam Hussein. I wasn't the only person who saw the threat. The United States Congress saw the threat; Republicans and Democrats saw the same

threat. The United Nations Security Council saw the same threat. The entire world saw that Saddam Hussein was a threat. He'd attacked his neighbors; he attacked U.S.—was attacking U.S. airplanes; he had used weapons of mass destruction; he had destroyed thousands of his own citizens. There are mass graves in Iraq because of his brutality. He was a threat. It was his choice to make: Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences. He made the wrong choice. The world is better off without Saddam Hussein in power.

And I want to thank Chris for his strong support in this war on terror. It's important to have people who are clear-eyed in this battle. It's important never to send mixed signals to our troops in combat. It's important not to play politics with the issue of war and peace. And I appreciate his strong stand. That's not easy, by the way. I understand that. Nobody wants to go around bragging about being strong in a war. But he is. And you just got to know, it's vital to have this kind of strength in the Halls of Congress as we implement a plan for victory.

We have one option, and that is to achieve our victory. And we have such a plan, and it starts with making sure that we deny a safe haven to the terrorists in Iraq. We got a plan that, on the one hand, says that democracy can help heal old wounds. And the Iraqi people have stood up three times in the past 13 months and made it clear to the whole world that they want to live in democracy. Over 11 million people voted in the face of terror. Their voices loud and clear, "We reject terrorism; we reject the dark view of the Al Qaida that want to use them as a safe haven."

And if you want to know how tough Al Qaida is, just look at—we don't know exactly who made the bombing of this incredibly important holy shrine in Iraq, but whoever did it is trying to stop the advance of freedom, because their ideology of darkness cannot stand the light that freedom brings to people around the world. The United States of America strongly condemns the destruction of a holy site. I firmly believe that whoever did this is not a religious person but an evil person. And I praise the leaders in Iraq who have urged for calm and who continue to

make sure that Iraq stays on the road to democracy.

The second part of our strategy is to train the Iraqis so they can take the fight to the enemy. One of the interesting things early on in this war in Iraq, they started bombing these recruiting stations. So the first question I asked our commanders on the ground was, are you having any problem finding recruits? And the answer was, absolutely not. The people of Iraq want to be free, and we're training people to help them secure their freedom. And as the Iraqis stand up, we will stand down. Troop decisions will not be made by politicians in Washington, DC, but by commanders on the ground. And we've got a plan for victory, a victory we will achieve.

In the long run, the way to lay the foundation of peace for our children and grandchildren and defend the United States of America is the spread of liberty. I know some have questioned whether or not it made sense, in my second Inaugural Address, to put a goal for the 21st century to be the eradication of tyranny. I can't imagine anybody questioning whether or not we should work to eradicate tyranny. Part of my decisionmaking process is based upon this principle and belief: I believe there's an Almighty; I believe that freedom is a gift from the Almighty; I believe everybody, deep in their soul, desires to be free. And therefore, you should not be surprised—I wasn't—when eleven million Iraqis said, "I want to be free." Freedom is the best way to achieve peace in the long run.

If you look at our history, we had—a lot of your relatives have died in wars on the continent of Europe. And yet, because democracy spread in Europe, Europe is now whole, free, and at peace. My dad fought the Japanese. I'm sure some of your relatives did as well. They were the enemy of the United States of America in a brutal war. And yet, today, I sit down at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan, talking about how to keep the peace.

And what's the lesson to be learned? The lesson is this: that when a country adopts a democracy in their own style, reflecting their own history and their own traditions, they become a peaceful nation. Democracies do not war; democracies yield the peace. And

someday, a duly elected leader from Iraq is going to be sitting down with an American President talking about how to keep the peace, and our children and grandchildren are going to be better off.

I want to talk about another decision I made that you've been reading about in the newspapers. Right after September the 11th, 2001, I called in people who have the responsibility of helping to protect this country. We've got some really fine people, by the way. Really good people on the frontlines of fighting off these terrorists. See, if you don't believe we're not at war, then I can understand why people were concerned about my decision with the NSA. But we are at war; there's an enemy that still lurks.

I spend every morning thinking about—at least every morning thinking about how to protect you. That's what you asked me to do; that's my job. It's really important for people in this country to know that the Government is working as hard as they can to protect the American people so you can go about your business. It's hard to be a risk-taker if all you think about is war. See, you've hired a lot of us to think on your behalf.

And so I called in those on the frontline. I said, can we do anything more to protect the American people? What can we do? General Mike Hayden of the NSA is one fine public servant—came back, he said, “Mr. President, I think we can do a better job of picking up communications from an enemy before they attack so we can possibly respond.” Mindful of that recommendation and mindful of the fact that I took the oath of office that said I will defend the Constitution and the laws of the United States—I called in the lawyers. I got a lot of them. [Laughter] I said, is what General Hayden recommended legal? Do I have the legal authority as the President of the United States to put this in practice—because it made a lot of sense his recommendation. He said, “Mr. President, we have the capacity to listen to Al Qaida or suspected Al Qaida and their affiliates in making phone calls from outside the United States, inside the United States and vice versa.”

It seemed to make sense to me that if somebody associated with the enemy is making a call inside the country, that it would

be helpful to know why, in order to protect the American people. Lawyers came back and said, “You got the authority, Mr. President.”

I then went and said, well, gosh, if we do go forward, I know there's going to be some consternation in the Halls of the United States Congress. So we briefed people responsible for intelligence and the leadership in both bodies, in both political parties. Just like my buddy in Texas said, “If you're trying to pull one over on them, why are you briefing the Congress?” [Laughter] “If you're doing something illegal, why did you call the Congress in and lay it for them to fully understand what we're doing to protect the American people?”

I wanted to share that with you. I think it's important for you to know why I make decisions. I'm confident what I'm doing—the decision I made is the right decision. If Al Qaida is calling in the United States, we want to know why.

We're also making decisions about how to keep this economy growing. One thing the people of this district ought to do is judge whether or not Chris's votes on creating an environment for capital to flourish is working or not. He said, look—he and I agree the role of Government is not to create wealth but an environment in which small businesses can flourish, in which people can realize their dreams, in which capital moves more freely, so that people can find work.

And our plan is working. This economy of ours has been through a recession, an attack, a war, and corporate scandals, major storms last year, and high energy prices; and we grew at 3.5 percent. The national unemployment rate is 4.7 percent. We've added 4.7 million new jobs over the past 24 months—or a little longer than—2½ years. Productivity is at an alltime high. More people own a home today than ever before in our Nation's history. More minorities own a home today than ever before in our Nation's history.

Our progrowth economic policies are working, and it starts with keeping your taxes low. Cutting taxes was the right thing to do. And if we don't permanently keep these tax

cuts in place, you're going to have a tax increase. And raising taxes is the wrong way to cause this economy to continue to grow.

I'm proud to have somebody like Chris who understands that when you have more money in your pockets to spend and save and invest, the economy grows. I've heard it—I'm sure you've heard all the talk in Washington. They said, "Look, we need to balance the budget, and therefore, let's raise the taxes." That's not how Washington works. They're going to raise your taxes, and they're going to figure out new ways to spend your money. That's how Washington works. The best way to balance the budget is keep taxes low, grow the economy, and be wise about how we spend your money.

And I appreciate Chris's support of fiscal austerity, and he does a good job. Every program sounds like a brilliant program in Washington, but you got to set priorities with the people's money, and that's what we're doing. We're on a plan to cut the deficit in half by 2009, but the toughest deficit of all is the unfunded liabilities inherent in Medicare and Social Security.

And I recognize some of them in Washington don't want to touch that issue. By the way, it's a problem for both Republicans and Democrats. Sometimes if the issue looks too tough, the easiest thing to do is head for the hills. That's not the way Chris thinks. On Air Force One today, he said, "Mr. President, are you serious about continuing to discuss how to fix Social Security and Medicare?" And I said, "Absolutely, Chris." He understands what I know. Our job is to confront problems and not pass them on to future Presidents and future Congresses. And I intend to continue working with Chris on Social Security and Medicare reform.

You know, there's always a series of choices in Washington, DC, and I understand there's still uncertainty in the economy. And I understand why. There's a lot of changeover with new jobs, and you got some folks here in this district that lost work. And this troubles our fellow citizens, and it troubles me, and it troubles Chris. And we have a choice to make during this period of uncertainty, and that is whether or not we become protectionists and isolationists, or whether or not we're confident about the capacity of the

United States to continue to lead the world's economy. And I'm proud to have a partner who ascribes to the latter philosophy.

Our view is this: We shouldn't fear the future because we intend to shape the future. And you shape the future with good tax policy and good spending policy. You shape the future with good legal policy. We got too many junk lawsuits making it hard for people to invest capital. We need legal reform in the United States of America if we intend to lead the world economy.

We intend to shape the future by encouraging research and development so this country remains the leading exporter and developer of new technologies. We're going to shape the future by changing our energy habits. I understand when an oil guy—I'm a guy from Texas—stands up and says, "We're addicted to oil," it caused people to take a second look. But I'm going to tell you something, being addicted to oil puts us in an economic bind as well as a national security bind. And I intend to do something about it.

I'm glad to have a partner with Chris. We're going to spend money wisely—your money wisely on research and development so we can develop advanced new batteries, so you can plug in your car at night and be able to drive 40 miles on electricity, not using a drop of gasoline. We're going to continue to expand the use of ethanol. It makes sense, by the way, to use research and development—your dollars for research and development to figure out ways to burn—better ways to burn corn and wood chips and saw grass. I want it so the American agriculture sector is providing energy for United States automobiles, not unstable parts of the world providing energy for U.S. automobiles.

We've got an aggressive agenda. We believe in things. We're optimistic people. We believe in our philosophy, and we know you've sent us to Washington to produce results. And one of the really important areas I know for people in this part of the world is to make sure health care is available and affordable, particularly if you're a small-business owner. Everywhere I go small-business owners say, "It's tough for me to stay in business because I'm having trouble with my health care costs." And that's dangerous for the United States. Two-thirds of all new jobs

in the United States are produced by small-business owners, and so we got to do something about it.

I want to warn you, however, that there is a philosophical debate in Washington and I would very—listen very carefully to the rhetoric during a political campaign. The debate is this, whether or not we should encourage market forces to help set price, or whether or not the Federal Government ought to be setting price. I strongly do not believe the Federal Government ought to be running our health care system, and neither does Chris Chocoma. We believe that we ought to strengthen the doctor-patient relationship, bring transparency to pricing and medicine, encourage the development of information technology so medicine is modern.

In order to make sure health care is available and affordable, we've got to do something about these lawsuits—not necessarily in Indiana—but around the country that are running good docs out of business and running up the cost of medicine for the taxpayers.

We have passed what's called health savings accounts. It's a great new vehicle to add market pricing into medicine and to put doctors and patients in charge of medicine. I strongly urge people who have run the small businesses to take a look at health savings accounts. And I look forward to working with Chris to make health savings account more acceptable and more available as an important antidote to those who want to federalize health care.

I do want to talk about one aspect of health care that is a Federal responsibility, and that's Medicare. When I got to Washington, DC, I decided to do something about a health care system that had become stagnant and old as a result of Federal bureaucracies making decisions. I'll give you an example. The Government would pay your taxpayers' money—your money to help a person with an ulcer surgery. It may cost 50 grand; I don't know what ulcer surgeries cost. Fortunately, I haven't had one. But it costs a lot. But wouldn't pay a dime for the prescription drugs to prevent the ulcer surgery from happening in the first place. That seemed like the system was a little old to me, and stale.

If you make a commitment to somebody, you got to make the commitment of excellence. And so I worked with Congress, Congressmen like Chris, to modernize Medicare, to provide a prescription drug benefit for our seniors. The Medicare modernization bill not only introduced HSAs but it gave seniors different options from which to choose. It's amazing what happens when you interject a sense of competition into a system. Do you realize that when we first analyzed the prescription drug benefit for seniors, they thought it was going to cost about \$35 a month for the seniors? Because of competition, it's down to less than \$28 a month. Competition works. Trusting people to make decisions works. Modernizing Medicare is an important, vital thing to have done. The Medicare bill I signed, that Chris supported, is going to make medicine for our seniors modern, and it's been necessary to do.

Good public policy is more than just talking about economic issues or cultural issues which matter to the United States as well. I'm proud to have a partner in promoting a culture of life in the United States of America. Banning partial-birth abortion was an important bill I signed and sends a signal that the United States of America should value all life in all forms.

The true strength of the United States of America is not our military strength or our economic strength, but it's the—the strength lies in the hearts and souls of our citizens. I am always astounded at the social entrepreneurship that takes place all around our country. I'm impressed by the thousands who have joined the armies of compassion to help bring hope where there's hopelessness and love where there's a lack of love.

Chris and I understand that the role of Government is limited, and it's a fact that Governments don't love. Governments can dispense law and justice but not love. And therefore, one of the most important initiatives of my tenure as your President has been to promote the Faith-Based and Community-Based Initiative, which recognizes Governments should welcome people of faith in helping to solve the intractable problems of our society. We should not fear faith in America. We ought to say to those who want to love their neighbor just like they'd like to



be loved themselves, “You should have equal access to Federal money, so long as you’re helping to meet a Federal need.” And we have a lot of need when it comes to saying to a brother or sister who’s lost, “I love you. What can I do to help you?”

I’ve probably been going on a little too long. I hope the food’s not getting cold. [Laughter] But I do tell you I’m proud to be here. I’m honored to stand by this good man. He’s a fine, fine person and a great Member of the United States Congress who ran for a reason. And today I hope I can share some of the reasons why both he and I are proud to serve our country. I hope you can get a sense of philosophy behind why. We’re not making up our minds based upon polls or focus groups. We’re making up our mind based upon a philosophy and what we think is right for all the people of this country.

Please send him back to the United States Congress. He’s necessary. He’s important, and he’s doing a fantastic job for the people of the 2d Congressional District.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:30 p.m. at Bethel College Indiana. In his remarks, he referred Sarah Chocola, wife of Representative Chris Chocola, and their two children, Caroline and Colin; Indiana Attorney General Steve Carter; Mayor Jeffrey L. Rea of Mishawaka, IN; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

## Remarks to the American Legion

February 24, 2006

Thank you all. Please be seated. Thanks for the warm welcome. Mr. Commander, thank you for letting me come by and visit with you about the subject of how to keep the peace and protect the United States of America. I’m proud to be with my fellow Legionnaires. Always a pleasure to be in the midst of veterans who served our country. I see some people who are not quite veterans yet that are with us, members who are serving all branches of Government, and I thank you all for coming. I appreciate your interest in the direction this country must continue to lead in order to protect ourselves and promote the peace.

I want to thank Carol Van Kirk, who’s the national president of the American Legion Auxiliary. Old Tom Bock is wise enough to always include the Auxiliary. He knows something about leadership. I want to thank Paul Hasz. I want to thank John Sommer, executive director. He spends quality time in the Oval Office, along with the commander. He’s never shy to express his opinion, but that’s what you pay him for. [Laughter]

I want to thank the chairman of the Senate Arms Services Committee, Senator John Warner. Senator, it means a lot to me and it means a lot to the folks here that you take time to come here to be with them. And I’m honored you’re here. Thanks for coming.

The American Legion is one of America’s great organizations. From your founding after World War I to today’s war on terror, Legionnaires have fought for our freedom, and you fought for the brave veterans who defended our freedom as well. You served our country in uniform, and you serve our country in civilian life. The Legion was founded, in the words of your constitution, “to build a sense of individual obligation to the community, state, and nation.” And when Hurricane Katrina struck our Nation’s gulf coast, Legion posts all across America swung into action to help neighbors in need.

Take, for example, Post 338 in Bradner, Ohio. These good folks helped arrange medical transportation to reunite a sick child with his family, after the family was forced apart because of the storm. Or Post 27 in DeRidder, Louisiana, which turned its bingo hall into an emergency shelter for 41 kidney dialysis patients and their caregivers and their loved ones.

I think it’s very interesting what the post commander, Retired Navy Master Chief Bill Loftin, said—by the way, he said it when he was cooking hot meals and helped care for disabled evacuees. He put it this way: “This is for human life. That’s what the Legion is all about.” In times of crisis, our citizens know Legionnaires always come through, and I appreciate you.

Members of the American Legion are showing the heart of the Legion every single day, not just when catastrophe hits. Across America, Legionnaires and members of the

Ladies Auxiliary volunteer in veterans hospitals, sponsor Scout troops and youth baseball, collect scholarship money for deserving students, including a special fund that the Legion established for the children of troops who've been killed in the war on terror. And I thank you for that as well.

Our Nation is grateful for your service on and off the battlefield. As you serve your fellow Americans in need, you're also strongly supporting the American flag. It was a Legion that helped draft our Nation's first flag code back in 1923. And Legionnaires have been working ever since to ensure the flag is cherished and protected. I appreciate your leadership of the Citizens Flag Alliance, and like you, I support a constitutional amendment to protect the American flag.

As veterans, you have placed the Nation's security before your own lives, and that sacrifice creates a debt that our country can never fully repay. Yet there are things Government can do, such as strongly support our veterans, and that's precisely what my administration is doing. The time when we're holding down discretionary spending, my 2007 budget—with my 2007 budget, my administration will have increased funding for our veterans by \$35 billion since I took office, which is an increase of 75 percent.

We have made health care a top priority for my administration. With my 2007 budget, we'll increase VA's medical care budget by 69 percent since 2001. Our increased funding has given almost a million more veterans access to the VA medical care system. Since January 2002, disability claims are being processed 63 days faster than they were when I took office.

In the last 4 years, we've committed almost \$3 billion to modernize and expanding VA facilities so that more veterans can get care closer to home. We're working to ensure that veterans with the greatest needs—those with service disabilities and lower incomes and special needs—are given priority. We're making sure that our men and women returning from combat are the first in line for treatment.

We're also getting results for veterans beyond the health care system. For more than a century, Federal law prohibited disabled veterans from receiving both their military

retired pay and their VA disability compensation. Combat-injured and severely disabled veterans deserve better. I'm the first President in more than 100 years to sign concurrent receipt legislation. And I thank the Legion for working on these issues.

Our Nation's debt extends not just to the veterans who served but also to the families who stood by them in war. I signed into law the Veterans Benefits Act, authorizing \$1 billion in new and expanded benefits for disabled veterans, surviving spouses, and their children. The families of our veterans have served our country; our Nation will honor their service by standing with them in their time of need.

As veterans you know what it means to leave your family, put on the uniform, and head off to war. And today in Afghanistan and Iraq and other fronts in this war on terror, a new generation of servicemen and women is carrying on your legacy of selfless sacrifice and courage under fire. As they fight dangerous enemies in distant lands, I know that you share America's pride in them, and I thank all of you for your strong support of our troops in harm's way. Their service is needed in these dangerous times.

We remain a nation at war. The war reached our shores on September the 11th, 2001, when our Nation awoke to a sudden attack. Like generations before us, we have accepted new responsibilities, and we will confront these dangers with firm resolve.

Our most important duty is to defend the American people, and so we're taking the fight to those who attacked us. We're taking the fight to those who share their murderous vision for future attacks. We will take this fight to the enemy without wavering, and we will prevail.

The enemy we face is brutal and determined. The terrorists have an ideology; they share a hateful vision that rejects tolerance and crushes all dissent. They seek a world where women are oppressed, where children are indoctrinated, and those who reject their ideology of violence and extremism are threatened and often murdered.

The terrorists have aims. They seek to impose their heartless ideology of totalitarian control throughout the Middle East. They seek to arm themselves with weapons of mass

murder. Their stated goal is to overthrow moderate governments, take control of countries, and then use them as safe havens to launch attacks against Americans and other free nations. To achieve their aims, the terrorists have turned to the weapon of fear. They don't have the military strength to beat us. They can't beat us on the battlefield. They just cannot defeat the United States military. And so they're trying to break our will with stunning acts of violence. The terrorists do not understand America. They're not going to shake our will. We will stay in the hunt. We will never give in, and we will prevail.

After the attacks of September the 11th, we have set forth a new strategy to do our duty to protect the American people. First, we're on the offensive, and we'll stay on the offensive, recognizing that we must defeat the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home.

Secondly, I've set a clear doctrine: America makes no distinction between the terrorists and the countries that harbor them. If you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorists, and you're an enemy of the United States of America.

Thirdly, one of the clear lessons of September the 11th is that the United States of America must confront threats before they fully materialize. After September the 11th, I looked at the world and saw a clear threat in Saddam Hussein. Saddam Hussein was an enemy of the United States. He was firing at American military pilots patrolling the no-fly zones. He was a state sponsor of terror. He was in open defiance of more than a dozen United Nations resolutions. He had invaded his neighbors. He had brutalized his people. He had a history of using and producing weapons of mass destruction. Saddam defied the will of the world. And because we acted to remove this threat, Saddam Hussein is in prison, he's on trial for his crimes, and the world is better for it.

Fourthly, we're advancing our security at home by advancing the cause of freedom across the world because, in the long run, the only way to defeat the terrorists is to defeat their dark vision of hatred and fear by offering the hopeful alternative of human freedom. That's what I want to talk to you about today—our forward strategy for free-

dom. I'll discuss why the advance of freedom is vital to our security and the peace of the world and how our efforts to spread liberty and democracy throughout the broader Middle East are progressing. I'm going to discuss with you our work to help the world's newest democracies build institutions of liberty that are the foundations for lasting peace. Our freedom agenda is based on a clear premise: The security of our Nation depends on the advance of liberty in other nations.

On September the 11th, 2001, we saw that problems originating in an oppressive state 7,000 miles away could bring murder and destruction to our country. We saw that dictatorships shelter terrorists, and feed resentment and radicalism, and threaten the security of free nations. We know throughout history that democracies can replace resentment with hope, and respect the rights of their citizens and our neighbors, and join together to fight in this global war against terror.

History has shown that free nations are peaceful nations. Think about all the bloodshed on the continent of Europe the past 100 years. In World War I and in World War II, there were bloody battles. Thousands of Americans went to Europe to fight in those wars and never came home. Democracy took hold in Europe, and today, Europe is whole, free, and at peace.

Think about the example of the Far East. You know, my dad, like many of your relatives, went off to fight the Japanese as an 18-year-old fighter pilot; 60 years later, his son is working with the Prime Minister of Japan to keep the peace. And what took place between war and friendship was the development of a Japanese-style democracy. As we march into the future, America must be confident in the capacity of democracies to yield the peace we all want.

We're committed to an historic long-term goal: To secure the peace of the world, we seek the end of tyranny in our world. Far from being a hopeless dream, the advance of freedom is the great story of our time. Just 25 years ago, at the start of the 1980s, there were only 45 democracies on the face of the Earth. Today, there are 122. And in the past 4 years alone, more than 110 million

human beings have joined the ranks of the free.

In our time, we've witnessed revolutions of Rose and Orange and Purple and Tulip and Cedar, and these are just only the beginnings. Across the world freedom is on the march, and we will not rest until the promise of freedom reaches people everywhere across the globe. It's in our national interest. It's important that we understand the capacity of freedom to yield the peace.

In the march of freedom, some of the most important progress is taking place in a region that has known—has not known the blessings of liberty, and that's the broader Middle East. Since September the 11th, 2001, the nation of Afghanistan has gone from the terror of the Taliban to a democratic Constitution, to successful Presidential elections, to the seating of a democratically elected Parliament.

In less than 3 years, the nation of Iraq has gone from living under the boot of a brutal tyrant to liberation, to sovereignty, to free elections, to a constitutional referendum, and to elections for a fully constitutional government.

By any standard or precedent of history, these two countries have made incredible progress on the road to a free society. America is inspired by Afghan and Iraqi determination to live in freedom.

Freedom's progress in Afghanistan and Iraq is inspiring millions around the world to demand their liberty as well. In Lebanon, in Kyrgyzstan, voters have gone to the polls to choose their leaders in free elections. In other nations across the broader Middle East, hope is stirring at the prospect of change, and change is going to come. In that region that has known decades of tyranny and oppression, we're seeing the rise of a new generation whose hearts burn for freedom, and they will have freedom.

As freedom spreads to new parts of the world, we're seeing something else as well, the uncertainty that often follows democratic change. Free elections are exhilarating events. Yet history teaches us that the path to a free society is long and not always smooth. I've seen that in our own history. In the years following the American Revolution, there were riots and uprisings and even

a planned coup. In 1783, Congress was chased from Philadelphia by angry veterans demanding back pay, and Congress stayed on the run for 6 months. [*Laughter*] It was then that Congress learned, don't mess with America's veterans.

It's important to remember that our first effort at a governing charter, the Articles of Confederation, failed, and it took over a decade after independence before we adopted our Constitution and inaugurated George Washington as our first President. Other countries have had similar experiences. After the collapse of communism in Eastern and Central Europe, nations like Slovakia and Romania and Ukraine struggled for many years to overcome the legacy of oppression before freedom finally took root.

No nation in history has made the transition to a free society without setbacks and false starts. Free elections are an important step on the road to a free society, but they're the first step. What separates nations that succeed from those that falter is their progress in establishing a civil society based on free institutions. So, as we work for democratic change across the broader Middle East, we're also working to help new democracies establish the institutions that are the foundations of lasting free societies.

Our efforts in the broader Middle East have been guided by a clear principle. Democracy takes different forms in different cultures. Yet all cultures, in order to be successful, have certain common truths, universal truths—rule of law, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, a free economy, freedom of women, and the freedom to worship. Societies that lay these foundations not only survive but they thrive. Societies that don't lay these foundations risk backsliding into tyranny.

This principle has guided our efforts in Iraq. When our coalition arrived in Iraq, we found a nation where almost none of these basic foundations existed. Decades of brutal rule by Saddam Hussein had destroyed the fabric of Iraqi civil society. Under Saddam, Iraq was a country where dissent was crushed, a centralized economy enriched a dictator instead of the people, secret courts meted out repression instead of justice, and Iraqis were brutally oppressed by Saddam's

security forces. And when Saddam Hussein's regime fled Baghdad, they left behind a country with few civic institutions in place to hold Iraqi society together.

So our coalition has worked to help the Iraqi people rebuild its civil society and the free institutions that sustain a democracy. And it has been very difficult work. Today, Iraq, though, does have a thriving free press, with hundreds of independent newspapers and magazines and talk radio shows where Iraqis openly debate the future course of their country. In spite of the difficulties, Iraq does have a emerging free market with an independent central bank, and thousands of small businesses operating across the country.

Iraq is building an independent judiciary that is replacing the rule of a tyrant with the rule of law, and which is now holding Iraq's former dictator to account for his crimes against the Iraqi people. Iraqis have adopted one of the most progressive democratic constitutions in the Arab world with protections for minority rights and women's rights. Iraqis now enjoy freedom of association, as we saw in the December elections, when parties and coalitions openly campaigned for the vote of the Iraqi people.

We're carrying out our clear strategy of victory in Iraq. On the political side, we're helping Iraqis build a strong democracy so old resentments will be eased and the insurgency marginalized. On the economic side, we're continuing reconstruction efforts and helping Iraqis build a modern economy so all Iraqi citizens can experience the benefits of freedom.

And on the security side, we're striking terrorist targets and, at the same time, training Iraqis which are becoming increasingly capable of carrying the fight to the enemy. Our strategy in Iraq is, as the Iraqis stand up, we'll stand down. Troop levels on the ground will be decided by commanders on the ground—not by politicians in Washington, DC.

In all aspects of our strategy, we've learned from experiences. We've learned from the good advice of people like Chairman Warner. We're fixing what hadn't worked. We'll continue to make changes as necessary to complete the mission, to meet the objective, and

that is a country which can sustain itself, defend itself, protect itself, and serve as a strong ally in the war on terror.

For every terrorist working to stop freedom in Iraq, there are many more Iraqis and Americans and troops from around the world working to defeat them. There's still a lot of work to be done. The enemies of a free Iraq are working to stop Iraq's democratic progress. Democracy scares them. They understand a democratic Iraq will be a major defeat in their totalitarian aims.

They're going to continue their campaign of violence and destruction. We saw their brutality again this week when terrorists bombed the Golden Mosque in Samarra. That mosque is one of the holiest sites in Shi'a Islam. This senseless attack is an affront to people of faith throughout the world. The United States strongly condemns this cowardly act of terror and the subsequent attacks on other mosques and holy sites in Iraq. We'll do everything in our power to help the Iraqi Government identify and bring to justice those responsible for the terrorist acts.

This is a moment of choosing for the Iraqi people. This morning I talked to our Ambassador in Iraq, Zafar Khalilzad, and General Casey. Zafar is actively engaged with leaders of all political factions to ensure a common message of restraint and unity. He reports to me that the leaders are committed to stopping civil strife. The Government is taking concrete steps to determine how the attack happened and the necessary actions to help move the political process forward. The Ambassador reports many religious leaders are committed to a unified Iraq, a peaceful Iraq. The response by the Grand Ayatollah Sistani and many other leaders has been constructive and very important, and we appreciate their leadership. It's also been a test for the Iraqi security forces. General Casey reports that they're doing a fine job of enforcing curfew and working to restore order and calm.

We can expect the days—coming days will be intense. Iraq remains a serious situation. But I'm optimistic, because the Iraqi people have spoken, and the Iraqi people made their intentions clear. In December, more than 11 million Iraqis sent a clear message to the world and to the terrorists: They want their freedom. They want their country to be a

democracy. Each of these elections that took place last year saw larger and broader participation than the one that came before. And with the results from the December elections in, the Iraqi leaders are now working to form a new Government under a new Constitution with different factions competing for position and jockeying for power.

Listen, the way ahead is going to require some patience as this process unfolds. The Iraqi Constitution requires two-thirds of the Parliament to form a government, which makes it harder to get agreement, but it helps ensure that all groups have a say in who governs them. The days ahead in Iraq are going to be difficult and exhausting. We're likely to see a lot of political bargaining. That doesn't happen under dictatorships. They seem orderly, particularly when one man makes all the decisions, and there is no need for negotiation or compromise.

In democracies, different party advance competing agendas, and they seek their share of power. And yet they reach accommodation and respond to the will of the people. And Iraqis are doing all this for the first time in the midst of violence and terrorist attacks. Yet out of negotiations now taking place in Iraq, a free government will emerge that will represent the will of the Iraqi people, instead of that of a cruel dictator, and that will help us keep the peace.

We're encouraging Iraqi leaders to reach out across political, religious, and sectarian lines and form a Government that gives a voice to all Iraqis. And when a new Iraqi Government assumes office, Iraq's new leaders will face tough decisions on issues such as security and reconstruction and economic reform. This Government will need to provide effective leadership and earn the confidence of the Iraqi people by showing it can protect them. The Government will also need to put a stop to human rights abuses by security officers. By building free institutions and an inclusive society that provides minority rights, Iraqi leaders will bring the nation together, and this will help to defeat the terrorists and the Saddamists who are fighting Iraq's democratic progress.

Some critics have pointed out that the free elections in the Middle East have put political power in the hands of Islamics and ex-

tremists, in the case of the Palestinian elections, a notorious—notorious terrorist organization. Critics argue that our policies of promoting democracy are backfiring and destabilizing the region. I strongly disagree. First, their argument rests on the false assumption that the Middle East was a bastion of stability before the United States came in and disturbed the status quo by promoting democracy.

It was the status quo of the Middle East that led to the bombing of our embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. It was the status quo in the Middle East that led to the attack of the U.S.S. *Cole* that killed 17 American sailors. It was the status quo in the Middle East that produced 19 hijackers and took planes and crashed them into the Pentagon and the World Trade Towers, and killed nearly 3,000 innocent people on September the 11th, 2001. The status quo in the Middle East was dangerous and unacceptable, and our security demanded that we change it.

Secondly, the idea that lasting stability can be achieved by denying people a voice in the future control of their destiny is wrong. It is, in large part, because people in the Middle East have been denied legitimate means to express dissent that radical extremism has flourished. And it's only by giving people in the Middle East the freedom to express their opinions and choose their leaders that we will be able to defeat radical extremism. As liberty spreads in the broader Middle East, freedom will replace despair and hope. And over time, the terrorist's temptation will fall away.

Third, free societies do not take root overnight, especially in countries that have suffered from decades of tyranny and repression. It should come as no surprise that after 60 years of Western nations excusing and accommodating the lack of freedom in the Middle East, civil society in that region is not strong and those with the most extreme views are the most organized.

It will take time for the people of this region to build political parties and movements that are moderate in their views and capable of competing in a free democratic system. Yet free elections cannot wait for perfect conditions. Free elections are instruments of change. By giving people an opportunity to

organize, express their views, and change the existing order, elections strengthen the forces of freedom and encourage citizens to take control of their own destiny.

Finally, as democracy takes root, the responsibilities of governing will have a moderating influence on those who assume power in free elections. It's easier to be a martyr than a mayor or a cabinet minister. When you're responsible for building roads and bridges and power stations and educating people and providing help, you're less likely to blow up health clinics and schools and bridges.

In democracies, elected leaders must deliver real change in people's lives, or the voters will boot them out at the next election time. This is a lesson that the leaders of Hamas will now have to learn, as they take power after their election victory in the Palestinian Territories. Hamas campaigned on a platform of fighting corruption and improving social services, and that is how a Hamas government will be judged by the Palestinian people. The leaders of Hamas have a choice to make. If they want the help of America and the international community to build a prosperous, independent Palestinian state, they must recognize Israel, disarm, reject terrorism, and work for lasting peace. The international community must continue to make clear to Hamas that democratically elected leaders cannot have one foot in the camp of democracy and one foot in the camp of terror. The world is waiting to see what choice Hamas makes.

The international community is also speaking with one voice to the radical regime in Tehran. Iran is a nation held hostage by a small clerical elite that is isolating and repressing its people and denying them basic liberties and human rights. The Iranian regime sponsors terrorists and is actively working to expand its influence in the region. The Iranian regime has advocated the destruction of our ally Israel. And the Iranian regime is defying the world with its ambitions for nuclear weapons.

America will continue to rally the world to confront these threats, and Iran's aggressive behavior and pursuit of nuclear weapons is increasing its international isolation. When Iran's case was brought before the IAEA ear-

lier this month, 27 nations voted against Iran, including Russia and China and India and Brazil and Sri Lanka and Egypt and Yemen. The only nations to support Iran were Syria, Cuba, and Venezuela. Now Iran's case will be taken up to the U.N. Security Council. The free world is sending the regime in Tehran a clear message: We're not going to allow Iran to have nuclear weapons.

The world's free nations are also worried because the Iranian regime is not transparent. You see, a nontransparent society that is the world's premier state sponsor of terror cannot be allowed to possess the world's most dangerous weapons. So, as we confront Iran's nuclear weapons ambitions, we're also reaching out to the Iranian people to support their desire to be free—to build a free, democratic, and transparent society.

To support the Iranian people's efforts to win their own freedom, my administration is requesting \$75 million in emergency funds to support democracy in Iran. This is more than a fourfold increase over current levels of funding. These new funds will allow us to expand radio and television broadcasts into Iran. They will support reformers and dissidents and human rights activists and civil society organizers in Iran, so Iranians can organize and challenge the repressive policies of the clerical regime. They will support student exchanges, so we can build bridges of understanding between our people and expose more Iranians to life in a free society.

By supporting democratic change in Iran, we will hasten the day when the people of Iran can determine their own future and be free to choose their own leaders. Freedom in the Middle East requires freedom for the Iranian people, and America looks forward to the day when our Nation can be the closest of friends with a free and democratic Iran.

Freedom is on the march in the broader Middle East. The hope of liberty now reaches from Kabul to Baghdad to Beirut and beyond. Slowly but surely, we're helping to transform the broader Middle East from an arc of instability into an arc of freedom. And as freedom reaches more people in this vital region, we'll have new allies in the war on terror and new partners in the cause of moderation in the Muslim world and in the cause of peace.

Bringing greater freedom to nations in the Middle East is the work of generations, and the advance of liberty still faces determined enemies. The terrorists know the stakes in the struggle. They know that as more people in the region embrace freedom, they will lose their safe havens, lose their recruits, and lose the sources of funding they need to advance their hateful ideology. And so they'll continue to fight freedom's progress with all the murderous hatred they can muster. They will continue to create images of violence and suffering for the cameras. The terrorists know that the only way they can defeat us is to break our will and force our retreat. And that's not going to happen so long as I'm the President of the United States.

We will stay on the offense. We will continue to hunt down the terrorists wherever they hide. We'll continue to stand with the people of the Middle East as they step forward to claim their freedom. We can be confident in our cause because we have seen freedom conquer tyranny and secure the peace before. We've seen freedom arrive on waves of unstoppable progress to nations in Latin America and Asia and Africa and Eastern Europe. And now the hope of freedom is stirring in the Middle East, and no one should bet against it.

We can also have confidence in our cause—we have the greatest force for freedom in the history of the world on our side, the men and women of the United States Armed Forces. They are serving with courage and distinction on many fronts in the war on terror. And I know America's veterans feel a special bond with them as they defend freedom in foreign lands.

In this war, we've lost some really good men and women who left our shores to defend liberty and did not live to make the journey home. Others have returned from war with wounds the best medicine cannot heal. As veterans, you've lost friends and comrades in the field of battle, and you understand the sadness that has come to some of our Nation's military families. We pray for the families of the fallen, and we honor the memory of all who have given their lives in freedom's cause. And we will honor that memory by defeating the terrorists and spreading liberty

and laying the foundation of peace for generations to come.

I appreciate the Legion's support for our troops in the fight. I appreciate the example you have set for those who wear the uniform today.

Before Veterans Day a few years ago, a group of soldiers serving in Iraq sent a letter to the American Legion Headquarters here in Washington. They wrote, "Veterans of past wars will forever be in our hearts as American heroes. Their sacrifices give us courage, and their devotion reminds us of what we are fighting for." Our men and women on the frontlines are taking inspiration from the valor and courage that you've shown on the field of battle. When they face dark moments in the thick of the fight, they remember that you faced enemies as brutal and determined as those who threaten America today, and they remember how you prevailed. And now they're picking up your mantle and carrying on your fight. And like our veterans, they're bringing security to our citizens and freedom to the world.

Thank you for your idealism. I thank you for your dedication to God and country. May God bless our veterans. May God bless our troops in uniform, and may God continue to bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. at the Capital Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Tom Bock, national commander, American Legion; Paul Hasz, commander, American Legion, District of Columbia; John Sommer, executive director, American Legion; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

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### **Digest of Other White House Announcements**

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The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

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**February 18**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

**February 20**

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo of the Philippines to offer condolences for the loss of life during massive mudslides in St. Bernard and to pledge continued U.S. disaster relief assistance. Later, he had a telephone conversation with President Vicente Fox of Mexico to discuss border security, immigration reform, and other issues. He then had an intelligence briefing.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Milwaukee, WI, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Beverly Christy-Wright. He then toured the Johnson Controls Battery Technology Center.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Selfridge Air National Guard Base in Macomb County, MI, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Brian Willingham. He then traveled to Auburn Hills, MI, where, at United Solar Ovonic, he participated in a briefing on alternative energy sources. Later, he traveled to Buckley Air Force Base in Aurora, CO, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Delmar "Pete" Beverly before traveling to Englewood, CO.

**February 21**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Golden, CO, where he participated in a tour of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the closing ceremonies of the 2006 Olympic Games in Turin, Italy: Rudolph W. Giuliani (head of delegation); Ronald P. Spogli; Mario Andretti; Lawrence E. Auriana; and A. Kenneth Ciongoli.

**February 22**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he met with Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld.

In the afternoon, the President had lunch with Vice President Dick Cheney. Later, in the Oval Office, he participated in a photo opportunity with crew members of the Space Shuttle *Discovery* and their families.

In the evening, in the Family Theater, the President and Mrs. Bush hosted a screening of "Glory Road" followed by a dinner.

The White House announced that the President will host Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy at the White House on February 28.

**February 23**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he had a telephone conversation with President-elect Rene Preval of Haiti to congratulate him on his election victory. He then traveled to Mishawaka, IN, where, at Bethel College Indiana, he met with a soldier wounded in Iraq.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Cincinnati, OH.

In the evening, at a private residence, the President attended a Mike DeWine for U.S. Senate reception. He then returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate John G. Emling to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs.

The President announced his intention to appoint William M. Murphy as a member of the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint Gail A. Jaquish, A.J. Scribante, and Jackie Winters as members of the Board of Visitors to the U.S. Air Force Academy.

The President announced his intention to appoint Antonio Falcon, Bruce D. San Filippo, and Cecilia Rosales as members of the U.S. Section of the United States-Mexico Border Health Commission.

**February 24**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing followed by a National Security Council meeting on Iraq. Later, he participated in interviews with television journalists from India and Pakistan.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with President Elias Antonio Saca Gonzalez of El Salvador.

The White House announced that the President will host Prime Minister Mikulas Dzurinda of Slovakia at the White House on March 13.

The President declared an emergency in Maine and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by record snow from December 25–27, 2005.

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**Nominations  
Submitted to the Senate**


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NOTE: No nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.

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**Checklist  
of White House Press Releases**


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The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

**Released February 18**

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 4745

**Released February 20**

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

**Released February 22**

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy

Fact sheet: The United States-UAE Bilateral Relationship

Fact sheet: The CFIUS Process and the DP World Transaction

**Released February 23**

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

Transcript of a press briefing by Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Frances Fragos Townsend

Fact sheet: The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned

**Released February 24**

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley on the President's Visit to India and Pakistan

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit of Prime Minister Mikulas Dzurinda of the Slovak Republic

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Maine

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**Acts Approved  
by the President**


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**Approved February 18**

H.R. 4745 / Public Law 109–174

Making supplemental appropriations for fiscal year 2006 for the Small Business Administration's disaster loans program, and for other purposes